The Righteous and the Profane: Performing a Punk Solidarity in Mexico City

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
Music in the Graduate School
of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Mexico City's punk scene has a notorious reputation, based on the supposedly angry, rude, and destructive behavior of its integrants. Certainly, participants in the punk scene value intense affects, aesthetics, and interpersonal exchange, but see them as means to amplify their political consciousness, their attempts to create alternative social networks. In this dissertation thesis, based on an extended period of ethnographic fieldwork in Mexico City's punk scene, I investigate the co-constitution of the aesthetic and political for participants of the punk scene and ask what "the political" might entail for the city's marginalized punk youth. In pursuing a local punk aesthetics that is both righteous and profane, to borrow descriptive terminology from Dick Hebdige, I argue for close formal analysis of musical, artistic, and other social performance. I employ formal analysis to evaluate the flourishing of punk in the context of "el DeFectuoso"—as residents name the hard-scrabble, global South metropolis of Mexico City—decades after punk's initial arrival in Mexico. Deluezian network theory and social movement theory more broadly help me argue for a politically constituted music "scene," created largely through U.S.-Mexico cross-border relations, without fixing its boundaries or stultifying its politics. Additionally, I explore the affective dimensions of punk performance, the role of music in subjectivization, and the importance of the body trained intersubjectively for both listening and performing. It is at the points of convergence of these three approaches that I locate a punk aesthetics as at once a punk ethics, animated by an ideal of "direct action." Within chapters organized through broad themes like networks, violence, labor, and solidarity, I address topics from the harsh, hard-working vocal performances punks employ to the various anarchist currents that shape an always-tenuous, specifically Mexican punk solidarity, constituted through practices like street sing-alongs, the creation of alternative DIY networks of exchange,

and fanzine writing and design. Within these routes of investigation, I elucidate the ways in which participants in Mexico City's punk scene use profanity and outrage in the performance of a righteous ethic that informs their struggles to maintain solidarity and make a difference, through an explicitly political social network that is nevertheless grounded in aesthetic experience.

Contents

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1. Introduction

1.1 Big City

They call it el DeFectuoso.

So Mexico City residents ruefully riff on "D.F.," itself a stand-in for the "Distrito Federal," which designates a large, 16-borough chunk of that sprawling metropolis, the seat of Mexico's federal government.[1] In addition to the Distrito Federal, la Zona Metropolitana de la Ciudad de México comprises some forty municipalities in the Estado de México, plus one in the state of Hidalgo, contributing to a total population of over 20,000,000 people.[2] The nickname el DeFectuoso, more cynically than lovingly bestowed, is often used to underscore general, systemic city problems from pollution and traffic to delinquency and official corruption.[3] The term speaks residents' dismay at their chaotic, often frustrating environment, and their resignation. "Así es," people sigh, so it is. In the densely populated capital and its environs, many residents have hardened themselves to the myriad of trying elements that shape their lives, and see each problem as of a piece with the inextricably snarled fabric of a defective city.

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[1] According to the national census, el Censo de Población y Vivienda of 2010, the population of the Federal District was 8,851,080 in that year. For more census data, see the report of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI) online at http://www.inegi.org.mx, accessed 23 February, 2013. For more details about the city's geography and political history, see Diane Davis, Urban Leviathan: Mexico City in the Twentieth Century (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1994).

[2] In 2005, officials in the Federal District and the State of Mexico came to this formal designation of la Zona Metropolitana de la Ciudad de México. This makes finding a total population of the Distrito Federal and the Zona Metropolitana combined more difficult. In official census data since 2005, the populations for the Distrito Federal are tabulated separately from those of the metropolitan zone, which are included with census data for the entire State of Mexico. (Census data for the State of Mexico may also be found at http://www.inegi.org.mx.) Nevertheless, the combined figure includes well over 20 million people, which puts Mexico City, broadly imagined as the Federal District plus la Zona Metropolitana de la Ciudad De México, in the rankings for one of the top three most populous cities in the world, after Tokyo and possibly Seoul, depending on the calculations involved. As one representative source, see for example, http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/world.htm, accessed 24 February, 2013. When I refer to Mexico City, as opposed to the Distrito Federal, I include the Zona Metropolitana, where I conducted fieldwork in municipalities like Ecatepec de Morelos, Nezahualcóyotl, Tlalnepantla, and others.

[3] The nickname "el DeFectuoso" is not the only one residents use to connote the megalopolis. Others, like Ciudad Monstruo or simply el Monstruo, also attempt to convey the enormity of the city and the frequently difficult quality of life it entails for residents.

For over three years, I lived close to the heart of Mexico City. I grew accustomed to staggeringly over-crowded transportation on the Metro and the various small vans and buses that clog the streets. I quickly learned to keep one sharp eye on my fellow pedestrians and another on the poorly maintained sidewalks with gaping holes, dangling power lines, ripe-smelling trash heaps, and piles of dog shit. As my lungs adjusted to the city's notoriously poor air quality, I was constantly ill, rail-thin. Still, unlike many of my new neighbors and friends, I often found the scrappy urbanity around me exciting while it exasperated or inconvenienced me. This was especially true during the year I lived in the "colonia" Santa María de la Ribera, a once-prosperous old neighborhood dotted with crumbling buildings in Beaux Arts style.[4] There and in the Colonia Tránsito where I lived next, the days were always bustling with activity. Music wafted out of small restaurants and shops, and thumped from passing cars and microbuses. Vendors and food carts lined the streets, hungry customers huddled around. Sex workers plied their trade both day and night, women loitering before rows of cheap hotels before sundown and transwomen after.[5] Internet cafes did brisk and steady business.

For a while, I lived directly across from a large butcher's shop. The air was perpetually filled with the clang of cleavers, the crackling of boiling oil, and the heavy scent of frying "chicharones" (pork rinds). Not to be outdone, the tamale man circled on a bicycle cart, its small speaker playing a recording that features a singsong, nasal voice promising warm, delicious tamales. Tamale vendors across Mexico buy the same recording, a uniform advertisement that has become a sonic icon of everyday Mexican life. Waves of workers walking beneath my window regularly woke me at 4:00 a.m. and

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[4] The large "delegaciones" of Mexico City incorporate hundreds of smaller "colonias." Though I lived in a few colonias during my fieldwork period, I always lived in the Delegación Cuauhtémoc, the borough at the center of the Distrito Federal. Despite the relative prosperity of this delegación, its colonias are not necessarily well to do. Some of the poorest and most crime-ridden neighborhoods in the city, such as the Colonia Morelos, which includes the barrio of Tepito, form part of the Delegación Cuauhtémoc.
[5] For an ethnographic account of the sex trade in Mexico City (specifically Nezahualcóyotl), see Annick Prieur, Mema's House, Mexico City: On Transvestites, Queens, and Machos (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

then again at 6:00. Tractor-trailers thundered by at all hours, or idled in the street. Passing the tortilleria, I would drink in the humid whiff of corn and the creaking of machinery, a nearby television set blaring commentary on the latest football match. Men selling fuel roamed the streets, bawling out their presence. Stalled by a car that wouldn't start, others tinkered under the hood in the early daylight. Domestic work was displayed on the roofs of apartment buildings, bedecked with washing, spiked with water and gas tanks. Enormous crowds of teenaged schoolchildren congregated on the corner in the afternoons, testing out the volume and importance of their voices.

After the bustle of the day the streets could become surprisingly quiet. Ignoring warnings about crime and violence, a friend and I regularly prowled the dark city, disturbing the midnight stillness with our soft chatter, ducking into the odd cantina or taqueria, sparsely peopled, jarringly bright. The city is beautiful at night, the darkness obscuring grime and patches of ruin, softening the contours of concrete buildings, shushing the loud commerce of the day. Metro stations and taxi ranks are lit like beacons, the few hardy merchants clinging nearby offering spiced coffee or creamy "atole" to sustain night crawlers through the high-altitude chill. Wandering down one of the city's vast, ornate avenues, la Reforma hung with elaborate shadows, we would pause on the heavy stone steps beneath the Ángel de la Independencia to watch the lazy nighttime traffic circle. Sirens regularly smeared the air, reminding us of our friends' cautionary tales.

Living close to the city center, I escaped many of the problems that plagued friends who made their homes in the far-flung Zona Metropolitana.[6] They counseled me against traveling to certain places on the city's margins, where armed hold-ups on public

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[6] For an account of how the growth of the metropolitan zone impacted the environment and quality of services in Mexico City, see Jorge Gamboa de Buen, Ciudad de México: Una Visión de la Modernización de México (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), 67-80.

buses were routine. When the government forcefully took over the city's electrical supplier (in a highly controversial move that many read as union busting), my neighborhood experienced short, hours-long outages, compared to the days-long blackouts reported elsewhere. During the peak of severe winter droughts, water still flowed from the tap, if various media outlets exhorted us to cut back. In some of the city's poorer regions, taps ran dry, merchants inflated prices on bottled water, and there were fisticuffs to greet the arrival of water trucks. When the rains came in the summer months, the streets might flood a bit, but that floodwater would quickly recede rather than rise and rise until it inundated homes and ruined property, as it too often did in places like Ecatepec, in the metropolitan zone. The buildings I lived in were often rife with plumbing problems, cockroaches, and rats, but I always had my own space. This privacy was something that made me the envy of many young people I came to know, in addition to my proximity to various cultural institutions, largely clustered in and around the city center.

Beyond the more reliable infrastructural services in the city center, the Distrito Federal also became known as a haven away from the violence of President Felipe Calderón's "war on drugs," which continued to escalate in regions across Mexico during my fieldwork period. Reports circulated that, ironically, some Mexicans living in communities plagued by cartel violence were moving to Mexico City, a place that had long been feared for its own high levels of violent crime and delinquency. Despite Mexico City's somewhat improved reputation, a handful of grisly crimes related to narco-trafficking did occur in la Zona Metropolitana over the course of my stay, prompting fears that it was only a matter of time before the "war on drugs" hit the capital. Indeed, during my fieldwork period, these fears were also fueled by the noticeable increase of violent cartel-related activity in other formerly tranquil places, from tourist zones like Acapulco to the bustling metropolis of Guadalajara. Security

measures were again much more evident in the Federal District than they were in the Zona Metropolitana, accomplished with the heavy hand of the state. These tactics, such as the installation of thousands of security cameras, mostly in upscale parts of the city, and a large, highly visible and highly armed police and military presence provided a daily, chilling reminder of the threat of encroaching drug-war violence. During the Bicentennial celebrations that took place in 2010, for example, 10,000 federal officers were reported to be out in force around the Centro Histórico, with military helicopters flying overhead and sharpshooters positioned atop the buildings lining the Zócalo, the plaza at the heart of the city where the most high profile ceremonies took place.

I arrived in Mexico City in June of 2008 and stayed for a long period of fieldwork, through November of 2011. The project that I initially contemplated didn't ever get off the ground, and so I spent the bulk of my first six months working on my language skills, becoming intimately familiar with the city, and acclimating to customs and sociability in urban Mexico. A friend urged me to check out the Tianguis Cultural del Chopo, an open-air market dedicated to music, where he was certain I'd find a new project to absorb my attention.[7] He envisioned a focus on "rock en español." Instead, I chose punk.

1.2 El Chopo

The Tianguis Cultural del Chopo is a centrally located cultural institution where you can go on Saturday afternoons to buy music and related paraphernalia, to hear live bands, to score some pot, or to mingle with "subcultural" groups—darks, rastas, punks,

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[7] The word "tianguis" comes from the Náhautl for "market." It is used to designate temporary open-air markets that are installed in city streets, usually once weekly, as the Chopo Cultural Market is.

rockeros, metaleros, jipis, emos, and skinheads.[8] Located in Colonia Guerrero, not far from the city's historic center and a ten-minute walk from my first home in the Santa María la Ribera, the market is a weekly gathering place primarily for young people from all over the city and metropolitan zone. Sometimes called, perhaps rather oxymoronically, a "countercultural marketplace," because of its association with rock music, the "tianguis" also draws plenty of casual visitors looking to spend a bit of cash while experiencing its unique and storied environment.

Indeed the "tianguis" is always an interesting place, as despite the obviously consumerist nature of the market, with "puestos"—vendors' booths—crammed to capacity with music-related merchandise, it has not lost its importance as a hang-out for city youth. At the mouth of the marketplace, the so-called "tribus urbanas" mix, hanging on the outermost lip of the market zone.[9] Should you pause to watch the darks fixing one another's hair and make-up, you may also see "skateros" weaving in and out of the crowd on their boards, punks giving out broadsheets or perhaps stealthily sniffing glue, ambulatory vendors hawking gum, cigarettes, and lollipops.

Walking down the street where the market is installed, you may pass a small visual arts exhibition or a workshop in progress in the so-called "corredor cultural." Perhaps a guitarist or drummer is demonstrating techniques for other musicians to learn, their virtuosic riffs punctured by the shouts of boys playing an improvised version of handball in an empty lot across the way. A shop at the side of the road often places its speakers at the entrance of the building, pumping classic rock outside and in. Several

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[8] The term "dark" refers to a person with what might elsewhere be called a gothic sensibility, while "rastas" are fans of reggae and Rastafarian culture. The adoption of the label "skinhead" refers to a local, contemporary version of a skinhead subculture that existed in 1970s Britain alongside punk. Mexico City's skinheads do not necessarily shave their heads, but have a distinctive self-presentation, as I describe later. There has historically been antagonism and even violence between punks and skinheads in Mexico City, but during my fieldwork period, they mostly coexisted peacefully, in part due to the efforts of participants in both networks who created events and even songs to promote a punk-skin solidarity.

[9] This "post-subcultural" term, "urban tribes," antagonizes many punks, who object to the ways in which they feel it trivializes and exoticizes them. I will return to this subject in the section titled "Networks."

people station themselves at this juncture to give out fanzines or fliers for events, clubs, and music lessons. Others chant their offerings of food and drink for sale. "Güerita!" several vendors cry out to me, cozying up "white girl" with its diminutive form, glossing my fair skin and foreign appearance as clues that I in particular have come with money to burn.

Making your way through this tight crowd, the street eventually becomes lined with "puestos" selling everything from Doors compilations to handbags made of fake fur and old records. An important market rule is that all merchandise sold in the "tianguis" must be music-related. Among the many records, compact discs, musical instruments, and band tee-shirts, there are also a great many things for sale that help people maintain their alternative identities, from clothing to piercing services, and a variety of knick-knacks for decorating the home as well as the body. Some vendors advertise their wares aurally, playing metal or ska or various other genres from small speakers wired up in their booths, adding another layer to the dynamic sonic texture.

After passing the first gauntlet of stands, you may well come to a small band of "rastas"—reggae and dub fans in bold red, yellow, and green—who emerge just before you come to an intersection, an open space for vehicular and pedestrian traffic not clogged with booths and merchandise. It is, however, often clogged with trash, its one garbage can filled beyond overflowing. Here you'll also see an oddity: the newspaper La Jornada maintains a booth at the Chopo, selling the daily issue as well as books of music and cultural criticism by favored authors. The rather staid adults who operate this booth seem a bit out of place amid all their dreadlocked, tie-dyed, tattooed, fish-netted, spiked, chained, and jackbooted young friends, but their presence recalls the days in which La Jornada took up the Chopo's cause, helping to defend the market from eviction by city authorities.

It is about here that the sound emanating from a live concert may begin to reach your ears from the back of the marketplace. After passing all of the carnival among the "puestos," and hopefully collecting a lot of "propa" en route to inform you about upcoming gigs, workshops and other arts events in the city with special appeal for young people, you will put the sound together with its source in an open space for musical performance off to the left. You may hear a variety of genres, but usually music by bands that have already encountered some success and garnered something of a name for themselves. Towards the right of the live music area, a small space fills with dozens of people seeking to swap their unwanted goods for the cast-off treasures of others, their voices buzzing a busy undercurrent to all the action.

Finally, at the very back of the "tianguis," in a raggle-taggle row along the asphalt, snuggled right up against the one portable toilet that serves the entire market, is the Espacio Anarcopunk. Unlike the majority of market vendors, the punks in this section do not rent "puestos," but squat their narrow strip of land, refusing to cooperate with the "capitalist" rules of the market. To avoid conflict, the market allows the punks to occupy the space without charge, while strictly regulating other aspects of their presence, such as preventing them from setting up booths or even erecting a tarp to shield them from the afternoon sun. The merchandise is arrayed on blankets or plastic sheeting on the ground, and those who want to beat the heat bring umbrellas or wide-brimmed hats.

In and around this short row of "puestos," different types of punks congregate. There are those who adhere to a more 1980s-inspired sense of style, with brightly colored spiked hair, nail-encrusted leather clothing, and military-style boots, the women often in mini-skirts, ripped stockings, and micro-tanks. Others present a more toned-down appearance, men and women all in black, wearing band t-shirts, black pants and sneakers, their hair in dreadlocks or mullets. People who embrace either style may well

have multiple piercings and tattoos. Additionally you may spot some skinheads among the group, neatly dressed, perhaps in rolled-up jeans with suspenders, Doc Martens, and ivy flat-caps.

If you arrange yourself among the makeshift "puestos" in the Espacio Anarcopunk, you may see lots more interesting people go by.[10] There are long-haired "jipis" in bright, messy artisanal clothing and "rockeros" in leather jackets and jeans, perhaps among the older generations of Chopo visitors.[11] There are "fresas," well-dressed middle-class kids who are not easily identifiable as belonging to any particular group, who mostly visit the Chopo on an occasional lark, and whose preferred musical choice may well be pop or alternative rock. These last may sometimes blend with the occasional thin, shaggy-haired emos who make an appearance despite all of the press in recent years about the hostility and aggression inflicted upon them by members of other groups, supposedly by punks in particular.[12]

In contrast to the rest of the market vendors, punks offer as much to read or watch as to listen to. Among the many CDs and occasional LPs on offer, there are also rows of "cloned" videos—largely documentaries on DVD—and books on punk, anarchism, and political history.[13] There are also several fanzines put out by members of the local scene or reproduced from those written by members of other scenes. Usually, fanzines are available for "cooperación voluntaria," whatever donation you should choose to make. Sometimes recordings are labeled with small, token prices, along with the warning that they should not be bought for a peso more. There are band t-

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[10] Some of these terms are not those that people would apply to themselves, such as the largely pejorative terms "fresa" and "jipi."
[11] Andy Bennett, "Punk's Not Dead: The Continuing Significance of Punk Rock for an Older Generation," in Sociology vol. 40, no. 2 (2006), 219-235. There are a significant number of older-generations fans who continue to take an active interest in various music "scenes" globally, which undermines traditional understandings of subculture, theorized exclusively as youth cultures.
[12] The term "emo" is a relatively recent arrival in Mexican culture, its international origins forming part of the reason for its often pejorative use, a subject that I will explore more fully in the following chapter.
[13] A "clone" is the preferred local term for pirated music or video.

shirts on display, as well as sporadic accessories such as homemade, spike-studded bracelets, buttons with band logos or political slogans, a coiled-up fuzzy purple leopard-print belt. A large "agua fresca" obtained from vendors nearby may well be making the rounds in case you get thirsty, and if you spot a punk vendor with a basket, most likely she has vegan food for snacking. Despite their fierce appearance, there are many inducements to linger with the punks, and when finally the market ends, you may well walk off with hands full, pockets and backpack stuffed with plenty to keep you occupied for the week ahead.

Whether or not there is an organized event scheduled for late Saturday afternoon or evening after the "tianguis" winds down, generally between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m., the Chopo is almost always a springboard for further socializing. There has to be extremely uncomfortable weather menacing market visitors if they don't hang out en masse into the evening. Even then, there are always a few diehards who shelter as best they can from the rain and cold so as not to miss a Saturday's recreation. A few cantinas and bars on the edges of the market space do a brisk business on Saturdays from post-Chopo patronage, blaring music above the din of the tightly packed crowds and perhaps serving meager snacks with the purchase of drinks to those who are lucky enough to have found unoccupied tables. Outside these establishments, legions more congregate on the street, stealthily sipping from "caguamas," shared liter bottles of beer, as the police pass again and again, hard faces set and eyes glaring in an attempt to intimidate the crowd. Here, the post-Chopo population pores over the day's acquisitions, looking at fanzines and recordings that friends have picked up, or perhaps continuing on with an even more informal bit of trading. Absent the music spilling out of the Chopo's "puestos" or live stage, people may take to musical performance themselves, aided by guitar-carrying friends.

Others may have left for a wide variety of other Saturday-night entertainment. Perhaps an anarchist collective is offering a lecture, followed by a party lubricated with the sale of "pulque."[14] Various organizations in the city offer the occasional free film screening, or perhaps another collective has procured a projector for that purpose. Someone may have heard of a house party or an event in a club or squat that sounds appealing. Gigs may well be attended after a few hours' socializing in the vicinity of the Chopo, the scene clearing around 9:00 when the larger of the nearby cantinas closes, if there has not been some incident—a large-scale brawl perhaps—to cause an earlier end of service.

Saturday night's musical offerings are generally advertised as starting somewhere between 4:00 and 9:00, but on-time arrival is unwise, as things don't even begin to get underway until at least two or three hours after the promised time. If there are no gigs and slim pickings generally, the post-post-Chopo crowd may well decide to move to the Plaza Garibaldi, famous for its wandering mariachi bands for hire and for being the one place in the city where the public can drink openly outdoors. Public transportation becomes scarce past midnight—far too early to call it quits on a Saturday night—and so the party in the plaza may well continue until morning. Saturday afternoons at the Chopo thus may last until or through Sunday, revelers using the "tianguis" as the catalyst to a weekend's worth of social events.

In addition to Saturday afternoons at the Chopo, I also spent a significant amount of time at El Clandestino, a club in Ecatepec that caters to fans of "heavy" music, particularly punk. There were also a number of events at the Auditorio Che Guevara, an "occupied" space on the main campus of the Universidad Nacional

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[14] "Pulque" is a pre-Hispanic drink made of the fermented sap of the maguey plant, a mildly alcoholic beverage experiencing a resurgence in popularity. In addition to the appeal of its native, pre-colonial roots, the drink is difficult to preserve and has not successfully been commercialized—another factor that makes it a favorite with politically conscious youth.

Autónoma de México (UNAM).[15] I frequently attended lectures, parties, and other meetings at the space rented by CAMA, the Colectivo Autónomo Magonista, an anarchist collective that also attracted punk participation. For a short burst of time, I attended meetings held by the Federación Local Libertaria, an umbrella group for several smaller anarchist collectives. There were various other spaces in the city and metropolitan zone that served as occasional sites for gigs, parties, and other events, from "ocupas" to clubs to private homes. Finally, there was the city itself. I spent a great deal of my fieldwork simply roaming the streets with my punk cohort, hanging out in markets, plazas, and parks.

Weekends were usually my busiest periods of fieldwork, beginning at the Chopo and then continuing through Sunday activities. On weekdays, I might meet up with individuals and small groups of friends in order to go to a lecture, a meeting, a film, or just to wander and chat a bit. I gave sporadic violin lessons to a few people affiliated with the punk scene. For a brief time before its closure in 2009, I also volunteered at the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir, an independent library of radical literature cared for by a member of the punk scene, where I catalogued rapidly deteriorating newspapers from the Spanish Civil War era.[16] Like various punk friends, I would get tired of the Chopo, certain that it no longer had anything to teach me. I would refrain from going for a time, but inevitably I would return. And so, the Chopo market remained at the heart of my experience.

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[15] The auditorium was occupied by students and affiliated groups during the university strike of 1999-2000. Since then, the continued "occupation" has caused controversy on campus, though the university tolerates the unauthorized use of the space as a community center and hangout for students and campus employees as well as people who have no official connection with the university.
[16] The library was the work of Spanish Civil War refugee Ricardo Mestre Ventura, who left it in the care of a young punk friend when he died in 1997.

*1.3 Ethnography as a Non-Punk "*Extranjera"[17]

My fieldwork in Mexico City started in an encounter with the punk scene at the Espacio Anarcopunk at the Chopo market. As I lingered, scanning the piles of merch at my feet, two men struck up a brief, if intense conversation with me. By the time I left, mere moments later, they had pressed DVDs and pamphlets on me, telling me that they were things I needed to see and read, and that I could keep the photocopies and return the video the following week. I was surprised by such a friendly reception and did my best to follow up, returning to the market not once but multiple times. It was at this early point in my acquaintance with the punk scene that I also spent time in the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir, on the urging of the first two men I spoke to at the Chopo.

While it seemed initially that there were people interested in taking an active part in my ethnography, that hope did not last—at least in terms of the kinds of participation that I was expecting. I had hoped that after I established contacts and a presence in the scene, I might begin to conduct interviews, for example. When I mentioned my desire to do interviews among them, some people laughed outright, but most simply ignored me.[18] Moreover, few people would respond to direct questioning, even in informal circumstances. Over time, I largely stopped asking for interviews, and tried to become more artful at asking indirect or leading questions in casual conversation. I found that scene participants continued to press information on me, occasionally and unexpectedly, in the form of anecdotes, materials like fanzines, or suggestions as to events that I should attend. These gifts seldom led to conversations, however. Even anecdotal information was conveyed in a manner more like "holding

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[17] "Foreigner" in its Spanish, feminine form. I've chosen this term to put my account in dialogue with U.S. anthropologist Diane Nelson's work on "gringa" identification in the course of her extended ethnographic work in Guatemala.

[18] One person did grant me an early interview. As it turned out, it became clear that most of my acquaintances would not grant interviews, and so I did not ask the one willing participant for any more.

forth" than like dialogue. Still, people would question me if I failed to turn up at an event, or if someone felt that I seemed bored or inattentive to the action around me.

Since my interlocutors were uninterested in interviews, I tried to encourage different forms of collaboration. Given the self-reflexive quality of punk identity, I hoped that I might motivate my new acquaintances to contribute their own writing to my final project, just as they contributed writing for fanzine projects and song lyrics.[19] This suggestion was met with the same kind of reaction that greeted my requests for interviews—aloofness, with some laughter mixed in. I also considered trying to play with a band, though that would have required switching from the violin to the guitar. Later in my fieldwork, I had friends in bands and aspiring musician friends who talked with me about this possibility. I had a few lessons on guitar and even drums from friends in the punk scene, but such plans were never fully realized.

If I did not find a way to encourage the active, dialogic participation I wanted from my interlocutors, some reasons for their reticence became painfully clear over the first several months of my fieldwork. Roughly four months after I began my project, I was introduced to a man at the Chopo market who was a part of the older generation of regulars, someone who had been participating in the punk scene since the 1970s. Our first encounter in the Chopo seemed like a lucky break. I told him about my goals for my research, how I hoped I could with time encourage the active participation and collaboration of the people I was beginning to know. He listened with interest and claimed to be willing to grant me interviews. Twice he promised to meet me for that purpose, and twice he neglected to appear at the appointed time and place. I assumed that it was oversight, that participating in my research was simply not a big priority.

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[19] Indeed, much of the available literature on punk, even the small amount of academic literature, has been created by people who self-identify as punks or as former members of vibrant punk scenes.

But a couple of months later, I found myself at an event, a round-table discussion and concert held in a club run by older-generation punk scene participants, created to talk about the meaning of punk in its contemporary form.[20] When the panelists ceded the floor to audience questions, the man who had twice stood me up took the microphone and announced that he was doing a book project on punk in the city. It would be a collaborative endeavor, so he was using the event to ask for people's active participation. He ended his remarks with a diatribe against "extranjeros" who came into the scene, looking only to "chingar," to fuck everyone over.

On another occasion in my early research, I was invited to tag along with a group of men of varying ages who were going to a showing of Republican propaganda films from the Spanish Civil War. The curator of the films was visiting from Spain, where she taught in a high school, giving her spare time to independent research on the civil war era. She spoke about her investigations after the lights came up, to an audience that I found to be oddly aggressive in the context of a free, public museum event. One persistent questioner, an older man, belittled her by using the familiar form of address—choosing "tú" instead of the formal and polite "usted"—as he excoriated her conclusions. Outside with my interlocutors, I found that the majority of them also resented the Spanish woman's participation in the event. Despite the fact that she earned her living as a schoolteacher, they claimed that she was a bourgeois intellectual, interested only in exploring "revolutionary" themes because it would enhance her career, giving me significant looks as they framed this verdict.

What made it more challenging to navigate the lack of active participation in my project, as well as the hostility that I experienced as an "extranjera" at times, was that

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[20] The event was titled "Ha muerto punk?" and held in "El Under," a club run by punk scene participants affiliated with a collective called the JAR, short for Joven Anarquista Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Anarchist Youth) in June, 2009. Panelists represented mostly older generation participants in the scene, who were largely in agreement that punk was still relevant.

these circumstances often coexisted with another strong affective reaction to my presence—desire. Diane Nelson talks about this dynamic as a pleasure that accompanies the pain of a "gringa positioning" in her ethnography in "Quincentennial" Guatemala.[21] For Nelson, whose research grew out of transnational activism in Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States beginning in the 1980s, her "gringa positioning" occurred at the entanglements of an identity that included not only elements like nationality, gender, and a "güera" phenotype, but also of a university educated Marxist feminist activist-scholar. Re-appropriating what can be a derogatory epithet—she relates that few Guatemalans she knew would be so rude as to call anyone a gringa to her face—Nelson chooses the term for the relations that the word encodes.[22] Elaborating on Abigail Adams's observation that a gringa is not a gringa until she crosses a border, Nelson describes various ways of a being a gringa in Guatemala, from "solidarity gringas" to missionaries, tourists, and others.[23] She also refers to people landlocked in the United States, but whose consciousness about life across the border may be awakening, as "gringos-in-formation."[24]

"Gringa" is not the only word that can be used to refer to women from the United States, however. Most of the people I knew in the punk scene actually preferred the term "gabacha/o" to "gringa/o." The term signifies a foreign other for various Spanish-speaking people around the world, though not only do Mexicans use it to name people from the United States, but they may also refer to the nation itself as "el

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[21] Diane M. Nelson, "Gringa Positioning, Vulnerable Bodies, and Fluidarity: A Partial Relation" in A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 41-73.

[22] Ibid, 63. For the record, few people called me a gringa or a gabacha to my face either, unless they were using such terms to tease me and thus suggest our friendship. People freely used the terms in my presence to refer to other North Americans, however.

[23] Ibid, 53.

[24] Speaking of her activist work in the United States, Nelson writes, "We organized speaking tours by Rigoberta Menchú and other Guatemalan activists to allow them to speak for themselves and to use the authenticity of their presence to incite awareness among 'gringos-in-formation'—people beginning to relate to Guatemala" (52).

gabacho."[25] In my experience, people differed in their opinions as to which word—"gabacha/o" or "gringa/o"—was more pejorative.

In addition to the slightly different types of foreignness encoded in "gabacha/o" versus "gringa/o," even courteous terms reveal the ambivalence with which Mexicans imagine their relationships to foreign others. I found that most of my friends and acquaintances used the term "norteamericana/o" to politely indicate the nationality of a person from the United States. In the beginning of my stay in Mexico, I preferred the term "estadunidense," because I thought it was more precise, distinguishing my national origins from those of a Canadian or indeed from a Mexican, given that geographically, all three territories make up the bulk of the North American continent. However, some people objected to the term "estadunidense," because Mexico is officially known as los Estados Unidos Mexicanos and therefore, Mexicans could technically be referred to as "estadunidenses" as well. According to local custom, I adopted the term "norteamericana," not only because it was the most common word choice, but also because, among participants in the punk scene at least, it seemed to be based on a desire to distinguish North America from Latin America, emphasizing cultural and political over geographical and even national boundaries.[26]

As anarchists, participants in Mexico City's punk scene distrust government and ostensibly, nationalistic sentiment too. Nevertheless, their interests in the cultural and "racial" considerations that comprise "lo mexicano" reveal continuities as well as

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[25] I also noticed that when people used "el gabacho" as a place name, they often waved their hands as though gesturing to some vaguely imagined, far-off location. I wondered if in fact, the lack of national specificity potentially embedded in the term was expressed through such gesturing.

[26] This bifurcation may seem strange, given the strong Latino/Latin American demographics of the United States. Despite their awareness and even personal experience of that link, however, most people I knew continued to characterize the United States as a predominantly Anglo country. Many people mistook me for a European, in fact, because they claimed that with my short stature and brown hair and eyes, I did not conform to their mental imagery of what a North American is. Additionally, Mexicans' relationships with other Mexicans who either emigrate or migrate across the U.S.-Mexico border may be difficult, despite the fact that remittances from Mexican migrant laborers form one of the pillars of the Mexican economy. Those who return to Mexico after a period of life in the United States may be labeled "pochos," a pejorative term that signals an undesirable acculturation into North American life.

divergences with many on the Mexican left who came before them. Since Vasconcelos's formulation of "mestizos" as the "cosmic race," leftists have looked to Mexico's indigenous heritage as its most authentic source of history and culture.[27] Artists like Frieda Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and José Clemente Orozco romanticized the indigenous in their work and in their public personas. These attempts to recuperate the value of a broad "mestizo" culture have their parallels in the efforts of other Latin American artists and intellectuals, such as Cuban poet José Martí and Nicaraguan Rubén Darío. Pan-Latin American sentiment has also animated Latin American revolutionary leaders from Simón Bolívar to Che Guevara. More recent writers, like anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, have disavowed the essentialism inherent in the writings of Vasconcelos, and also of later theorists of "mestizaje" like Octavio Paz. Indeed, Bonfil Batalla alleges that "mestizaje," the posited fusion of a "Mesoamerican" and "Western" civilization is an illusion even among its seeming celebrants, whom he accuses of trying to assimilate indigenous culture into a Western civilizing project.[28]

Importantly for anarchists and other activists in Mexico and beyond, the Zapatista rebellion and the subsequent creation of La Otra Campaña provided a new model of solidarity with indigenous communities, emphasizing the autonomy of indigenous peoples while also welcoming a broad solidarity between them and other resistance networks of diverse people across the globe. Still, a resentment towards Bonfil Batalla's "imaginary Mexico"—the Mexican nation dominated by people who at best celebrate its indigenous past as local color, and at worst actively suppress indigenous communities—operated among my interlocutors in the punk scene. Participants in Mexico City's punk scene also demonstrated their regard for indigenous

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[27] José Vasconcelos, "The Cosmic Race" in The Mexico Reader, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 15-20.
[28] See Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, México Profundo: una civilización negada (México, D.F.: Editorial Grijalbo, 1990).

life and their own indigenous heritage in a variety of ways, from acting in solidarity with indigenous communities in political struggle to promoting the revival of ancient Mesoamerican practices like the "temazcal."[29] Though I would not wish to deny the many differences among Europeans and North Americans, my experience suggests that a pan-Latin American sentiment, based on characteristics like skin color as well as other cultural factors, influenced perceptions of foreignness among my interlocutors in the punk scene.[30] To some extent, though our particular national origins were not forgotten, those of us from Europe and North America were grouped as a distinctive "Western" other, contrasted not only with most Mexican nationals, but also with their Latin American neighbors.

While most of the foreigners I met in the context of the punk scene were traveling in Mexico, there were two foreign women and one foreign man who were more permanent fixtures in the punk scene than I was, one woman from the Basque region of Spain and the other from Germany.[31] Both women self-identified as punk and had lived in Mexico for extended periods of time. The man was a Peruvian who had lived in Mexico and participated in the punk scene for many years. He was not among the

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[29] People I knew in the punk scene had participated in Zapatista "encuentros" and had traveled to other regions as well, interfacing in a variety of ways with indigenous communities. The "temazcal" is a sweat lodge, used in ancient Mesoamerican tradition to heal and purify. In a festival to celebrate International Women's Day, a collective of women participants in the punk scene had a "temazcal" created for festival-goers. A number of my interlocutors also advised me that I should check out punk bands from Otomí communities in the state of Hidalgo, who vocalize in the Otomí language.

[30] Regarding the importance of skin color to this understanding of foreignness, I also relate the following: In addition to the many "güera/os" from North America and Europe who traveled through Mexico during my fieldwork period, there were also two brief visits by an African-American and a Japanese punk. Both men's presence generated a great deal of discussion regarding their otherness, including a significant amount of commentary that sounded stereotypical (especially on the "culture" of the Japanese man) or even racist (in speech about the African-American man) to my ears. While it is not generally considered impolite to talk openly about people's complexion in Mexico, with people categorizing each other as "güera/o" for the relatively fair-skinned and "morena/o" for the relatively dark-skinned, the African-American man was distinguished by some speakers as "negro"—"black"—in addition to other comments that led me to believe that his appearance was targeted as the butt of some jokes. Among Mexico City's punk scene, I know of no one who had a strong "African" appearance, nor did I meet anyone who spoke of African heritage. My interlocutors were mostly "brown-skinned," no more so than the majority of Mexico City's overall population, but certainly more so than the city's elites, who are typically (though not exclusively) fair-skinned, corresponding more closely to a "güera/o" phenotype.

[31] For most of my fieldwork period, North American visitors came and went in a steady trickle, though a handful did stay for months-long durations that overlapped with my own years-long visit. Still, none of the North Americans settled for as long as the European women who had become fixtures of the scene, though the Basque woman left about a year into my fieldwork.

people I socialized with regularly, and for a long while, I did not know that he was Peruvian. While the two European women stood out as being "güera" in appearance, the Peruvian man resembled the people of our punk cohort more closely, and I had not had much opportunity to listen for slight differences in speech. Once I knew of his nationality, however, I kept an eye out for evidence that his foreignness was as marked among Mexican participants in the punk scene as it was for the European women.[32] While their foreignness was a frequent topic of conversation, I witnessed far less interest in his. Apart from the occasional comment, like the one that had finally clued me in, I saw little evidence that his origins as a Latin American other were given the same attention that the European otherness of the women was.

In fact, I believe it was because of an awareness of this specific valence of "Western" foreignness that tensions existed between European and North American "extranjera/os" who participated in Mexico City's punk scene. In a later chapter of this thesis, I tell a story in which a woman uses the term "gringa" to denigrate the depiction of female characters on a flier for a women's festival. In that telling of the tale, I leave the speaker completely anonymous. Here, I point out that it was in fact one of the European women who used the word, pointedly distinguishing her foreignness from my own and that of the other "gringas" in attendance.

In addition to some tensions between foreigners who participated in the punk scene, I often heard my interlocutors belittle people whom they accused of behaving in a sycophantic manner towards light-skinned foreigners. While I did not often experience

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[32] The specificity of historical, cultural, and political relationships between Mexicans and North Americans from the United States, encoded in a term like "gringa/o," has a counterpart in the pejorative term that Mexicans use for Spanish people, "gapuchines." I actually never heard this term applied to the Basque woman who hung out long-term in the punk scene, though I did hear it applied to a man from Spain who visited the punk scene in Mexico City twice during my fieldwork period. I don't know if this was due in part to the fact that she identified as Basque rather than as Spanish, but she was also greatly liked, while his presence was far more contentious. I never heard anyone use any particular national or regional slang to refer to the German woman, though people did emphasize her difference in other ways, such as pointing out her accent, for example.

this dynamic in my own interpersonal relations, I did experience a great deal of sexualized attention from men—both within and beyond the overwhelmingly male-dominated punk scene—something that suggests a lingering privilege of "whiteness," especially in gender relations.

In her "gringa positioning," Nelson discusses how in her fieldsite in Guatemala, a *güera* identity is often privileged as a more sexually attractive mode of femininity than those marked by "mestizo" or more clearly indigenous phenotypes—creating in the gringa "a constant frisson of enjoyment in being treated as an object of desire."[33] She also describes the ways in which the privilege of whiteness, coupled with foreignness, can result in a sense of moral goodness and imperviousness to danger in the "solidarity gringa."[34] As one among other activists privileged by a "gringo 'güera' phenotype backed by the eagle passport," often treated to great hospitality by Guatemalans who appreciated the work they did in helping draw international attention to their cause, her sense of invulnerability was punctured by violent attacks on several "gringas," especially the beating and rape of June Weinstock, who was left for dead after her hours-long assault in 1994.[35] This sense of the "wounded, open" body of the foreign "güera" led Nelson to reconsider not only her sense of invulnerability in the field, but also the double-edged partiality of her subject positioning as a "solidarity gringa."[36]

My own sense of partiality to the people I came to know in the course of my fieldwork was rarely recognized as such, despite a prominent discourse of solidarity

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[33] Ibid, 56.
[34] Ibid, 45. Here Nelson talks about her sense of an "almost magical power" before turning to the assaults and deaths of several "gringas" in Guatemala.
[35] Ibid, 45-47. My fieldwork period was also marked by the brutal beating and death of a young woman from the United States, Marcella "Sali" Grace Eiler, who had ties to the punk scene in Mexico City, a subject that I will return to in the chapter on violence.
[36] Nelson discusses the "partiality" of personal identifications like race, gender, and nationality as part of her attempt to problematize the concept of solidarity. She writes, "I develop the concept of 'fluidarity' as a practice of necessarily partial knowledge—in both the sense of taking the side of, and of being incomplete, vulnerable, and never completely fixed (Clifford 1986). This neologism plays with the idea of 'solidarity' in an attempt to keep its vitally important transnational relations open and at the same time question its tendency toward rigidity, its reliance on solid, unchanging identifications, and its often unconscious hierarchizing."[36]

within the scene, bonding scene participants with others understood to occupy a "habitus" marked by points of commonality, especially class, "punkness," and as I will argue, gender and sexuality. In the early days of my ethnography, many people approached me to tell stories about who punks were and what they stood for. I also underwent repeated questioning about my own identity and politics. Was I a punk? Was I an anarchist? Why had I never hung out with punks in the United States? I replied candidly that I had not lived anywhere that had, to my knowledge, much of a punk scene. Regarding anarchism, I tried to leave that as the open question that it had rapidly become for me, reflecting the internal debate a better acquaintance with anarchism—as a historical body of ideas and as a series of practices—had provoked.[37] My own hesitation (and desire for honesty) thus obstructed any claims I might make to the partiality of "taking sides," though every now and then, solidarity might be extended to me temporarily.[38]

Questions about my "positioning" never stopped over the long period of my fieldwork, however, nor did I receive them only from Mexican participants in the local punk scene. While Nelson fondly recalls her sense of solidarity with fellow gringa activists, a sense of solidarity between me and other North Americans visiting the punk scene in Mexico City was not a given. Often, they too wanted to know about my lack of punk identification, questioning, for example, whether I could have participated in punk scenes in my youth if I had only tried a bit harder, overcoming the lack of public transportation to get to the vibrant scene in Boston, just under two hours away. Another potential gringa-in-solidarity questioned the ethics of my choice to pursue

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[37] In an academic environment in which I had come into contact with many self-proclaimed Marxists, I had always been made uneasy by my inability to claim that political and scholarly orientation. Anarchism addressed many of my doubts, and in several ways, "fits" my political sensibilities better, though ultimately, I can't say I would feel comfortable proclaiming myself an anarchist either.

[38] In making this statement, I distinguish solidarity from friendship. I did form friendships among people in the punk scene, but they were based on affective ties other than those that might found a sense of solidarity, though I do not intend to claim that friendship and solidarity are mutually exclusive relationships. I will discuss the differences between friendship and solidarity in a later chapter.

higher education, despite having come from a family in which several people had doctoral degrees.[39] These types of questions about my lack of involvement with punk seemed to express doubts about the correctness of my politics. I never claimed to be "punk" nor an anarchist, but several foreign visitors still seemed to feel a need to distinguish themselves from me as we all participated in Mexico City's punk scene.

For my part, I was often taken aback by the many North American visitors who referred to their "poverty," in what seemed a misguided attempt to suggest their solidarity with Mexican punks, who rarely used the term to describe their own circumstances.[40] Not only did such individuals neglect to delineate the qualitative differences in the experience of poverty in the global North and South, but also they often used the label to define the results of their choices more than limitations imposed by their social and economic positioning.[41] Solidarity with my fellow North Americans was often elusive. Conflicts with other foreigner visitors actually made my relationships with local participants in Mexico City's punk scene seem doubly difficult at times, though in hindsight, I actually learned quite a lot from them.[42]

My foreignness was thus a key part of what defined me in my relationships among Mexico City's punk scene participants, from my status as a fair-skinned "extranjera" living in Mexico to my lack of experience as a punk. Our lack of solidarity

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[39] My Mexican collaborators also felt this dubiousness over my educational choices. It didn't take long for them to find out that I belonged to quite a rich and prestigious exemplar of the elite North American higher educational institution. Still, the choices of whether and how to pursue a university education for my acquaintances in Mexico City were quite different than those among the North Americans.

[40] While my interlocutors talked a great deal about class solidarity and often lived an experience of economic marginalization, they tended to reserve the notion of poverty for people who suffer its most extreme results. For example, an image designated as a depiction of poverty in fanzines or CD packaging might feature the representation of an extremely malnourished child.

[41] As examples, I refer to the choice not to pursue an education, or to engage in "work refusal." This last is a fascinating political choice, but one whose economic consequences some of my North American acquaintances seemed ill-prepared to accept. For an account of work refusal, see for example, Kathi Weeks, The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

[42] And of course, I did enjoy the company of some. My favorite memory is of a woman who seemed to regard me with the same wariness as I did her. Watching a Spanish-subtitled, English-language movie one night in a group of Mexican participants in the punk scene, the two of us suddenly cracked up laughing at a joke. Our Mexican friends, some of whom had substantial experience living in the U.S., stared at us bewilderedly. Our interactions were far more friendly after that transformative moment.

seemed at times to cause punk scene participants to feel a skittish sense of self-protection around me. The people I was interacting with had strikingly different levels of involvement in political activities, some of them riskier than others. But given the history of the repression of youth culture and politics in Mexico City, there was widespread concern about the consequences of political activism, outspokenness, or even the appearance of differing from a moral mainstream. In this environment, conspiracy theories abounded, leading to another form of questioning that I never quite outpaced: the half-joking query, "So, are you with the CIA?" Speaking on or off the record about involvement in a scene that was often accused of violent, antisocial behavior would take either a leap of faith or the intense feelings of trust that a person like myself was quite unlikely to inspire. My exclusion from these close affective bonds also may have caused my interlocutors to feel an even tighter bond among themselves.

Perhaps because of the ways in which solidarity was rarely extended to me, even while my presence in the scene was tolerated, my experience of the gender and sexual dynamics that Nelson reports provided less of a frisson and more of an irritant. Without the weight of activist organizing in Mexico behind me, or a punk identity, to many I seemed to lack clear motives for hanging out in the scene, despite my repeated explanations of my intentions. For a long time, many of the men I met seemed to view me more as a potential girlfriend than as a researcher. This not only made it more difficult to carry out my research, but it also made it more difficult for the few people who were genuinely interested in participating in it. For example, there was one man who immediately became a loyal friend, and initially we attended many events together. As time passed, I found myself constantly negating the supposition by other interlocutors that I was his girlfriend—a negation that I undertook with far more warmth than he ever did. Once it became clear to his cohort that our relationship was not a sexual one, he bore a great deal of mean-spirited teasing because of his continued

friendship with me. (Among other taunts, his "apodo," his scene-bestowed nickname, was frequently altered to end in the word "gay."[43]) Actively participating in my research could thus result in embarrassing social consequences when I didn't produce the anticipated outcomes.

Despite the uneasiness that persisted throughout the entirety of my fieldwork period, with many people refusing to have anything to do with me and some who greeted me with open hostility, there was always another group of people who seemed to enjoy my company. On a few occasions, people who generally behaved towards me in an aggressive manner unexpectedly regaled me with stories, or gifted material from their own collections to me. Others made a habit of such indirect forms of participation in my research, befriending me, pointing out events that might be of interest. Plenty more tolerated my presence with the bland, neutral acceptance that might greet any foreign person, consenting to treat me as a social acquaintance and nothing more.

With time, I accepted the fact that my ethnography was restricted to a literal form of participant observation in which I learned solely through participating and observing, what my dissertation advisor Louise Meintjes termed "deep hanging." While I would have liked to have engaged in the collaborative activities that ethnographers frequently employ to supplement participant observation—techniques such as interviewing and the playback of recordings among interlocutors to solicit further commentary—I learned to make use of all of my interactions, from abrupt, intimidating, or seemingly random exchanges to more friendly, obviously helpful encounters. Though I did not enjoy the particular pleasures and pains of a "gringa" solidarity that Diane Nelson describes, I did come to embrace the partial perspectives engendered by my positioning as "extranjera."

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[43] Being labeled homosexual was indeed a slander in this context. I will explore themes of gender and sexuality as they play out in the punk scene in later chapters.

1.4 Theorizing Encounters

As I began to contemplate how to write my own "partial" ethnography, I realized that in order to represent my interlocutors, the best policy was to keep them all anonymous. Not only did this seem the safest and most fair course, but also it seemed best in keeping with my ethnographic experience. Using people's names or nicknames was obviously out of the question, but bestowing false names on people whose real, legal names I often never learned seemed absurd, particularly since I would not be making use of direct quotations. Apart from the handful of people with whom I formed close attachments, most of the people that I interacted with regularly told me little about themselves. Mostly I knew their "apodos" or their first names, plus where in the city they were from, and how they earned a living. Whatever else I might glean was largely acquired through indirect means, through observation or gossip. If my "hanging" in the scene was deep in one sense—in the length of time I spent attending events and returning to my habitual field sites—it was shallow in another, in the lack of depth that marked most of my interpersonal exchanges. In a sense, I too remained anonymous. I learned to ask few questions, and received few in return.

So my interlocutors and I knew one another, but in many of the ways I thought would be most important at the start of my project, we did not ever know one another. In fact, throughout my fieldwork period, reminiscences of wonderful ethnographies I had read, detailing intimacy between ethnographers and their field communities haunted me. A statement like the following, written by Aaron Fox in his "Real Country," lingered in my memory, suggesting a correspondence between the enviable depth of his archive and the enviable depth of his interpersonal relationships:

> …it is in the nature of long-term ethnography that an ethnographer's tape recorder gradually becomes relatively invisible as personal relationships between

an ethnographer and his or her interlocutors deepen, as well as over the course of particular recording sessions.[44]

If perhaps Fox's experience seems extraordinary for precisely these reasons, I hoped at least for a turning point, the magical moment of acceptance that some ethnographers relate as marking off early research from the satisfactions of mature ethnographic experience. As I ran to and fro between fieldwork sites and the 2009 Society for Ethnomusicology's annual meeting, which took place in Mexico City, I had an unusually poignant opportunity to compare tales of ethnographic "arrival" with my own experience, particularly as ethnomusicologists swapped stories between conference sessions. At that early point in my research, such tales inspired me to keep hoping for an ultimate entrée.

That golden moment never came. But over the course of writing about my fieldwork, I realized that I too had amassed a wealth of ethnographic experience in my years hanging out with Mexico City's punk scene. The "nature" of my ethnography was obviously quite different from Fox's, but still I managed to learn a great deal without the warm, friendly, direct assistance of the majority of my interlocutors and without relying on some of the techniques I had initially regarded as essential.

The quality of my often-challenging interactions in Mexico City's punk scene reflected not only my own "positioning," but also a certain preference for brusqueness

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[44] Aaron Fox, Real Country: Music and Language in Working-Class Culture (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004, xv. In addition to interpersonal challenges, the issue of recording gigs was one that was fraught with its own particular difficulties. At some gigs, much of the socializing among my cohort took place outside of the venue itself, where the music could be heard without the need to the pay an entrance fee and without suffering the hot and unbelievably cramped conditions inside the building. Especially at the beginning of my research, I did not want to isolate myself from my new acquaintances in order to focus on recording. Additionally, while some performers and concert organizers treated me like any other member of the audience, who might record if she had the equipment, I encountered resistance from others. When I did record events, I found that the loud, highly distorted sound of a punk band in a small, tin-roofed concrete building packed floor to rafters with screaming fans overwhelmed my modest sound recording capabilities, and I also struggled to hold a video camera aloft while packed into a dense crowd moving energetically to the music. Finally, despite the fact that I did not have expensive equipment, I was not comfortable moving about the neighborhoods where I attended gigs, frequently alone at late hours, with my gear. So with all things considered, I regretfully decided to forgo recording after a few months of experiment.

and intense feeling on the part of my collaborators. As I will relate in later chapters, Mexico City's punks tell of their valorization of "energy," of "rage," and other strong emotions, an appreciation that plays out in many of their own interpersonal exchanges. Following my advisor's suggestion that I represent this quality of my ethnography through writing, I looked especially to Kathleen Stewart, who in her book "Ordinary Affects," wrote short narrative bursts about contemporary North American life to convey abrupt, fleeting exchanges that she called "encounters."

"Encounters can happen anywhere. And not the just sad and scary ones either." So Stewart begins an anecdote of a puzzling, faintly amusing, vaguely disturbing moment of misrecognition she experienced during a routine wait in a convenience store checkout line.[45] Stewart's narrator recounts that a woman in line smiles so beatifically at her that she must think they know one another. But the woman does not respond to the narrator's attempts to understand their connection. She simply smiles. Later, chatting over dinner, the narrator's family decides that the woman must have been high on something. The narrator herself acquiesces to their conclusion, but remains unsatisfied by the explanation, unsettled by the memory of the inexplicably beaming face.

This encounter is one of a collection through which Stewart seeks to represent the "ordinary affects" of her ethnography's title, defining them as comprising

> an animate circuit that conducts force and maps connections, routes, and disjunctures….a kind of contact zone where the overdeterminations of circulations, events, conditions, technologies, and flows of power literally take place.[46]

Tracking ordinary affects, Stewart attempts to uncover the feelingful realm surging beneath an ordinarily placid, "normal" exterior of daily North American suburban life.

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[45] Kathleen Stewart, Ordinary Affects (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 81.
[46] Ibid, 3.

The brief encounter with an oddly ecstatic and enigmatic woman forms the basis of a tale that suggests potential affective readings from a seemingly random, cryptic moment.

Pursuing ordinary affects, Stewart casts her ethnographic voice in deliberately generic terms. Writing in the third person, which she labels simply "she," Stewart identifies her role as marking a presence, "a point of impact, curiosity, and encounter:"

> "She" is not so much a subject position or an agent in hot pursuit of something definitive as a point of contact; instead, she gazes, imagines, senses, takes on, performs, and asserts not a flat and finished truth but some possibilities (and threats) that have come into view in the effort to become attuned to what a particular scene might offer.[47]

Forgoing personal narrative, "she" nevertheless places the narrator through the details of her encounters, which in turn give rise to a wondering attention to the affective circuitry underlying and shaping contemporary North American life. While my own ethnography took place among a network of people and in a series of events less diffuse and aleatoric than Stewart's, it was marked by a similar sense of interpersonal distance from the subjects in question, though also by intense affects that seemed anything but ordinary.

Stewart names various models for her fragmented, disjunctive writing style, works that attempt to "perform the intensity of circuits, surges, and sensations."[48] Citing Walter Benjamin's "Arcades Project" and Roland Barthes's "S/Z," Stewart situates "Ordinary Affects" in an experimental continuum that stretches back to modernist criticism and outward to the contemporary fiction of authors such as Ian McEwan and Khaled Hosseini. She also indicates a dialogue with the "ficto-critical efforts" of Alphonso Lingis and Lesley Stern, among others.[49]

In my own engagement with the ethnographic encounter, I write most especially from Stewart's example, though Steven Feld also has written about the analytical work

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[47] Ibid, 5
[48] Ibid, 6.
[49] Alphonso Lingis, Dangerous Emotions (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). Lesley Stern, The Smoking Book (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

of telling stories of ethnographic encounters in the specifically musical context of his "Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra."[50] Additionally, Michael Taussig's "My Cocaine Museum" is an inspiring assemblage of narratives encompassing natural, cultural, and political history, drawn together in the construction of an imagined space for the fetishization of cocaine, fantasized as a ghostly metonym for Bogotá's Gold Museum.[51] I also respond to Kath Weston, whose fieldwork took place on several long-haul Greyhound bus trips, during which she gathered stories from her fellow passengers, ordering the material from encounters with various seat-mates into five "rides" that tell the experience of living poor in the United States.[52] Hugh Raffles's "Insectopedia" provides another unexpected model, as he employs encounters between insects and people to uncover varied human relationships with an often-dismissed or reviled animal realm.[53]

In the work that follows, I continue along this experimental trajectory. Beginning each of four chapters with a series of brief, evocative, and open-ended narratives based upon my encounters with the punk scene or with life in Mexico City more broadly, I seek to perform a similar role to that of Stewart's "she," crafting stories that use my own experience as a point of impact for the reader, indicating multiple routes of interpretation. In the chapters that follow the clusters of stories, I reveal one potential theme that links them before presenting additional information and reflection on how they might be understood. Despite the loose thematic suggestion I present through written encounters, I also intend to impress upon the reader the terse, adamant quality of the in-person encounters that inspired them. Portraying interpersonal encounters through short, abrupt narratives, I emphasize the coherence of my storytelling with the

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[50] Steven Feld, Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five Musical Years in Ghana (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).
[51] Michael Taussig, My Cocaine Museum (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
[52] Kath Weston, Traveling Light: On the Road with America's Poor (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008).
[53] Hugh Raffles, Insectopedia (New York: Pantheon Books, 2010).

vehement aesthetics and politics that punks perform. As I will argue, encounters in the punk scene help to condition participants' toughness and righteousness, training them to enact a politics that favors autonomy and direct action while also embracing an aesthetics of noise, contrast, and confrontation. While writing encounters allows me to present rich ethnographic data without fixing any one precise meaning, the practice also offers me the chance to represent the intense, even conflictive sociability I experienced among participants in Mexico City's punk scene.

In choosing which encounters from my fieldwork to shape into written narratives, I also have been guided by the influence of another body of scholars, anthropologists of sound and ethnomusicologists, whose work exposes the entanglements of aesthetics and politics. David Samuels traces North American popular music forms as they are reconfigured as expressions of Apache identity on the San Carlos Reservation.[54] Louise Meintjes analyzes the politics of race and gender through aesthetic negotiations among musicians in a post-apartheid South African recording studio.[55] Exploring a "politics of voice," Amanda Weidman unpacks musical utterance and instrumental imitation to demonstrate how music constructs, rather than simply reflects, a social and political self.[56] From these and other scholars, I continue the practice of putting musical, artistic, and social performance on an equal footing, rather than privileging one or another during an inquiry into their cultural and political significance. Such a practice is particularly useful in engaging with Mexico City's punk scene, where I heard at least as much talk of politics as I did of music, if not more. Following the assertions made in my encounters with the punk scene, I evaluate punks' claims to membership in an explicitly political

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[54] David Samuels, Putting a Song on Top of It: Expression and Identity on the San Carlos Apache Reservation (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004).
[55] Louise Meintjes, Sound of Africa! Making Music Zulu in a South African Studio (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
[56] Amanda J. Weidman, Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

social network, one that is nevertheless organized around and enacted through aesthetic practice and preference.

I am also indebted to the many scholars who have informed my understanding of Mexican culture, from the geography and politics of Mexico City to the rich musical traditions that thrive in various regions of the country. The writings of Jorge Gamboa de Buen (1994) and Diane E. Davis (1994, 2005), as well as those of John C. Cross (1998, 2011), provided me with detailed information about the history, politics, and economics of life in Mexico City's over-stretched metropolis. Authors like Clara Lida (2001, 2009), Carlos Illades (2001), Donald C. Hodges (1995), Elena Poniatowska (1985), and Ribera Carbó (2010) helped me to build on my understanding of Mexican political history, in addition to primary sources like the writings of Mexican anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón and Marxist José Revueltas. In addition to classic texts by José Vasconcelos (2002) and Octavio Paz (2008), authors like Roger Bartra (2002), Guillermo Bonfil Batalla (1990), and the Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos (2004) have all informed my understanding of race and indigineity in modern Mexico. Regarding gender politics, I benefited especially from the insights of Americo Paredes (1967), Matthew Gutmann (1996), Roger Lancaster (1992), and Annick Prieur (1998). As for the history of rock music and the Tianguis Cultural del Chopo in Mexico City, I am especially grateful for the writings of Abraham Ríos Manzano (1999), Héctor Castillo Berthier (2004), José Agustín (1996), Tere Estrada (2008), Eric Zolov (1999), and Maritza Urteaga Castro-Pozo (1998). The work of ethnomusicologists who study punk as a transnational genre and underground scene from authors like Emma Baulch (2007), Jeremy Wallach (2008), Alan O'Connor (2008), and Simon Reynolds (2005), has also provided an important foundation for my own investigations.

In the chapter that follows, I will also engage with the work of scholars who have theorized social networks, from youth cultures to social movements, as I trace the

entanglements of Mexico City's punk scene with other social and cultural networks, elaborating on the history and cultural politics of rock music and youth activism in Mexico City. Turning to a consideration of labor practices among participants in Mexico City's punk scene in a second chapter, I will reflect on the work of scholars who study labor practices, including a focus on the affective labor and hard physical work of punk vocalizations. In chapter three, I will consider the charges of violence and delinquency that have often been leveled at participants in Mexico City's punk scene, placing them in the context of multiple forms of violence that impact city life, from crime to narco-trafficking. In the first chapters, I thus elucidate some of the important ideas and experiences that unify—and challenge the unity—of participants in Mexico City's punk scene, before turning to an explicit focus on solidarity, placing it in the context of anarchism, which has not only been linked to punk as a global underground scene, but has also played an important role in the history of Mexican politics. I also elucidate the different forms of affective ties that may help to create a sense of purpose and togetherness, as well as exclusion, in networks like Mexico City's punk scene, from friendship to affinity to solidarity. In all of these investigations, I am motivated by an abiding interest in the entanglements of aesthetics and politics, and how notions of solidarity help to shape a music scene that explicitly privileges its politics.

Ultimately, I believe that at the root of many encounters I experienced, my punk friends desired to suggest to others, within and beyond the group, their exemplary ethics and preparedness for direct action—their preferred, anarchism-inspired "modus operandi" in a struggle for social change. The willingness to engage in these kinds of performances is key to being part of the group, and I argue that it is a better marker of group identity than musical preference, style of dress, or shared ideology. By writing encounters, I hope not only to illustrate the intensely experienced character of the performances that shape punk aesthetics and politics in Mexico City, but also to suggest

the ways in which participating in such encounters may create a shifting sense of belonging and purpose, even for an “extranjera” like myself.

2. Encounters

It was another long, long afternoon into night following a day at the Tianguis Cultural del Chopo, and "la banda" was restless. I was spending time with a group that was essentially bar-hopping, having started in one "cheleria" (beer hall) in the market vicinity, before moving on to the next. Our circle had already lost a couple of members to over-consumption—a rarity in a group that can mostly hold its liquor to an astonishing degree. Upon entering the cantina's women's bathroom, I came across a woman who was having an epic vomiting session, unable to stop heaving. As I emerged back out into the evening air, the high-pitched screams of two more women fighting assailed my ears. One threw a beer bottle at the building, which shattered against the cantina's window. Taking quick action, the cantina staff immediately prepared to close early, lowering a heavy metal curtain that creaked and shrieked as it slid into place, safeguarding the windows against a rowdy crowd.

Boarding a bus with a handful of punk friends one afternoon, I felt a hush descend on our fellow passengers, who darted quick glances in our direction, at once curious and anxious. The muted attention prompted conversation about what it means to be punk. Someone voiced the term "tribu urbana," urban tribe, a concept that has taken hold among many Mexican sociologists and journalists who write about youth sociability. Spoken in a spirit of mockery, the term was met with a general hissing as we descended from our bus and out of the heightened consciousness of its riders.

"Punk is a movement, or maybe a counterculture. Anything but a fucking tribe," asserted one friend. Another asked us to don our feathers and then began a little war dance, whooping and hopping about like cartoon representations of Native Americans.

After hanging out in the vicinity of the Chopo market for a few hours, we headed for the Plaza Garibaldi. The one place in the city where you can drink in public, outdoors, with impunity, it is always a lively place on a Saturday night. In the Metro station, one of our party had a run-in with a cop who appeared to be hassling an older man, asking for no obvious reason to see his identification. As one person raised his voice, yelling abuse, others joined him. The cop took out a walkie-talkie, calling for reinforcements. But most of us were already in the subway car. The doors closed on the cop, amid the hush of subway passengers who didn't seem to know where to put their eyes.

Close to where I was standing in a knot of friends, someone had brought a guitar and a few people were trying to make a musical evening of it, but it wasn't working. "Is that 'The International?'" someone questioned me as we tried to make sense of the confused shards of sound that reached our ears. I admitted that I had no idea, the various voices were so chaotic and disparate, each seeming to be singing a different tune. Someone asked for another tune from the guitarist nearby, but it didn't quite happen. There was some strumming and some singing, but what might be called a song, a cohesive performance, never really emerged. Not to be daunted, one of our circle shouted with gusto, "The noise of the street is our music!"

The murmur of all of the voices in the Plaza Garibaldi is audible before the plaza itself is in full view—the square is full of revelers. Though we choose to stand at the opposite end from the musicians, the breeze occasionally carries a snatch of melody to us, for this is the plaza famous for its mariachis, wandering in their elaborate matching suits. A man comes around with the "toques," and my companions urge us to give it a

go. He clinks the metal bars together and twiddles a few knobs, sending an electric current through our linked hands. We grind our teeth, yelp in pain, laugh at one another's horrified faces. A cell phone rings. "Sí jefa," a woman says, checking in with her mom, turning away from the group for a bit of privacy. There are Micheladas to pass around, foaming at the top with chile and lime. Laughter in the distance. Vendors' cries pierce the general din, hoping to persuade a few to check out their wares. A waspish comment and then a laugh as we clink our coins together, count our change, and decide who's going to purchase the next round. Quiet, beseeching voices and upturned palms of beggars hoping the party mood will run to generosity. The never-ending traffic with its impatient drivers honking, and the government employees in their orange jumpsuits, trying to get a jump on the trash fast accumulating, rasping at the concrete with their brooms.

The more old-school styles of punk tend to form the repertoire of a few special unifying figures within the scene, of whom I've counted thus far no more than a handful in a group that contains over a thousand easily—a kind of modern-day punk troubadour, who rarely appears without his guitar and the desire to perform. These wandering minstrels often conform to the old-school model in their fashion sense as well as musical style. One, a tall, lanky and always carefully stylized purveyor of song still sports a shabby, hand-painted, hand-nailed real leather jacket in a new era in which many have put aside their leather (animal rights!), stopped spiking and coloring their hair, and toned down their outro appearance much like alternative youth in the global North. His boots are leather too, worn out and beat up and sewn up, their tongues hanging out, revealing sockless feet. A ripped black body shirt barely hanging onto itself ventilates rather than insulates his torso. A belt with metal rings dangling accessorizes his outfit, as well as a few comic touches—perhaps a codpiece (where on earth did he

unearth that?), eyeglasses without any glass. Through the frames of his windowless glasses, he fluttered his eyelashes and puckered his lips, posing and flirting as he enjoyed my admiring, amused gaze.

In transit with punk companions another afternoon, we almost collided with a couple kids descending from a bus, their lank hair hanging into and over their eyes in a jagged, vision-obscuring fashion. My friends were highly amused at the sight of them, and as we searched for our seats they jokingly wondered if the kids had slit wrists—self-inflicted wounds supposedly being part of emo style, "cutting" or suicidal tendencies symbolizing the exquisitely tortured nature of their souls. They pushed my hair over my eyes to see if I too might be harboring secret emo tendencies.

The group among whom I found myself gratefully found a bit of shade, and began passing around the beer. A punk troubadour came by with his dilapidated pink acoustic guitar, named Ixchel in honor of the Mayan moon goddess.

The breadth of his repertoire was impressive. There was no song requested that he could not immediately launch into without a moment's hesitation. I also admired the rapidity with which he could strum in a consistently downward motion. Meanwhile, the circle of friends pressed around him, passing the beer bottle on that (mercifully) cooling evening, did their best to make the impromptu street "tocada" a group effort. Heads thrown back, they belted the lyrics in a style more shout than song. A woman standing next to me had said that she recently lost her voice at a rally. Yet this did not prevent her full participation—her hoarse, husky voice adding an extra flavor to the mingled timbres of the group of belters, hers being one of the more enthusiastic. As a lyric came with which the crowd identified strongly, they raised their voices, changing the quality of the delivery to a pronounced yell, raised their fists, and looked at one another, nodding,

eyebrows raised as if to say, "yes, that's how it is!" And so it went, song after song after song.

"Heeyyy, banda!" he cried as he approached me and only me. I checked, scanning my peripheral vision for people upon whom he might more appropriately be bestowing that term of belonging. But no, there he was, looking straight at me and extending his fist, which I awkwardly bumped with my own. Throughout this exchange, I watched his face closely for signs. I didn't think he was pulling my leg.

I was tagging along with a group of punks bound for the Glorieta de Insurgentes, where they planned to sell their wares to passers-by in the waning twilight. Instead, my companions were quickly engrossed with a large group of kids who appeared to be "emo." Approaching them with edgy, threatening humor, making jokes at their expense, my companions tried to panhandle from them. One kid nonchalantly handed over some change, though most refused. The tough guys re-doubled their efforts to look menacing, insisting it was only fair that emos, children of privilege, should fund their party. Meanwhile, a European woman who hung out in the punk scene chatted with me a few feet away. Some of the emo kids approached us with curiosity, wanting to know where we were from and why we were hanging out with those guys. Their excited chatter revolved around their musical tastes, desires to travel abroad, and a number of bemusing comments that seemed designed to impress us with their worldliness.

At one of my very first gigs, I was pulled into the slam. A friend and I were standing close to the dancers, and as their circle widened towards us he got an arm around my shoulders and steered me into it. The dancers were packed in a dense cluster of elbows, fists, and knees, and I was terrified by the thought that if I should fall, I

would definitely be trampled at least a little before anyone could help me up. I disliked my friend's protection, feeling vulnerable tucked under his arm, but I could not extricate myself from his grip while moving with the crowd. When the dance was over, I found I had ceased to breathe during it.

As the Chopo market was winding down one Saturday evening, a friend and I decided to visit the Casa Naranja, a newish squat out in Tlalnepantla where there was to be a party that night. At the "ocupa," a number of people were milling about, but the party only really started when the hip hop artists prepared to perform, doing elaborate mike tests that pulled everyone into a tight crowd before them. The guy playing sound man and sometime DJ had a wind-up battery lamp glowing ultraviolet to see by, and as he placed it on the console, he flipped down his shades. Despite the seriousness of "hip hop libertario" rhymes, a party atmosphere dominated.

Later, a hardcore punk band began to play, and in the tight space of the squat's front room, some of the audience was inspired to slam. Those of us who didn't want to participate regrouped at the outskirts of the space, hoping to avoid random limbs that were flung in our direction. It was here that I found myself pressed in close next to one of the hip hop artists who had just performed. "You should get in there," he said to me, jokingly, as we surveyed the tangle of bodies surging before us. I smiled at the suggestion, but told him that I preferred moving to the hip hop. To this, he put his lips close, close up to my ear so that his voice buzzed against it, and said in a deep, sultry tone, "Es mucho más rico, no?"

There was a quite a buzz before the show featuring Etacarinae, a Spanish-Portuguese hardcore/crust band scheduled to appear in an odd location—a place loaned by Krishnas who employed it as their regular worship space. Beginning late on a

Sunday afternoon, the gig was located virtually in the heart of the city center, quite unusual really, though perhaps this might have been conceived of as one of its charms. Another was implied fairly strongly by a concert organizer, who was often critical of the trouble caused by excessive consumption of alcohol at events. There was a strict no-drinking-or-smoking policy inside the concert space.

I had just pricked up my ears and leaned in to have a good listen to the opening band when the lead guitarist broke a string. Worse yet, he had no spare. But the guy from the first band lent his guitar, so it seemed that the day had been saved. The tee-totaling crowd remained remarkably quiet as the guitarist angled his back to them and bent over the loaner, tuning it up to his satisfaction. But the tuning went on and on. Little by little, commentary began to ripple through the crowd. After a few moments, it became a mild, good-natured heckling. Finally, after about eight minutes, the guitarist stopped. With surprisingly little complaint from his bandmates or the audience, he simply gave up.

Of all of the things with which punk in Mexico City has been associated over the years, one of the ideas that has stuck is that it is—ultimately and importantly—a phenomenon "muy callejero," very much of the street. One drizzly day, I approached a large group of my own acquaintances hanging outside a "cheleria," but with the attitude that I was only passing by. It was as if I saw them with new vision, as though when I rounded the corner—also taking an unaccustomed route—my startled eyes froze the image in a snapshot that I then scrutinized intensely as I walked through the crowd, with the surreal recognition dawning only slowly that I knew these people. Overwhelmingly male, the group was dressed largely in black and stood in small circles talking, smoking, and passing "caguamas." In the grey, damp air, puffs of smoke ascended from each group like the tail ends of a campfire, and with their somewhat ragged clothing, beat-up

leather, chains and other metal accents, I had the sense of having stumbled on some bizarre medieval encampment.

3. Networks

3.1 "El Chopo" and "La Banda": A Brief History of Rock in Mexico City

In addition to the vital importance of the Chopo as a gathering place for punks, the history of the Chopo market also illuminates various difficulties and inequalities of daily life in Mexico City. Though there are those in the punk scene who complain about the Chopo, disapproving of its sometimes rowdy atmosphere or its restricted internal politics, the "tianguis" remains a key location for anyone interested in being part of the punk scene. There are Chopo "regulars," who turn up weekly to display their wares in the Espacio Anarcopunk or for whom the market forms a major star in their social constellations. Many others pass by on occasion, making a long trip in from the metropolitan zone or beyond, an impossible journey except on rare occasions. Due in part to the convenience of its central location, the "tianguis" is a place where people go to swap information, to plan and advertise events. Many punk gigs and other events take place on Saturday afternoons and evenings, taking advantage of the opportunity to reinforce advertising with the day's draw of those who will come directly from the Chopo. Foreign visitors often spend a Saturday afternoon in the Chopo too, knowing its reputation as a punk stronghold. Despite rifts within the scene and conflicting notions of who truly belongs, the market is unique in that it attracts members of various punk sub-groups rather than being a nucleus for any one sub-group in particular. Finally, the market's tortuous history also highlights the difficulties that Mexico City's young people face as they work to secure spaces for their free expression and interaction.

Rock music, and youth culture generally, have long had a contentious history in Mexico.[1] Eric Zolov catalogues the ways in which rock music was understood as a threat to patriarchal norms of the 1950s when it was first imported as "rocanrol," capturing the attention of largely middle class youth initially, gaining a more widespread appeal in the tumultuous 1960s.[2] Mexican cultural critic and "ondero"—a participant in the counterculture of the late 1960s—José Agustín takes his account of youth culture further back, beginning his narrative in Los Angeles, California in the 1940s, just as the Mexican PRI government was consolidating its power in a push for "modernization," which resulted in mass migrations from rural Mexico.[3] Living in social and economic circumstances not unlike those endured by the local African-American population, Mexican migrants and Chicanos in Los Angeles adopted elements of black urban style. Dressing in zoot suits, these so-called "pachucos" danced to swing or music with more Latin American roots—danzón, rumba, and mambo. As "pachuco" sensibilities drifted back across the U.S.-Mexico border, they fused with an already-present dance culture in Mexican cities.[4] Though not overtly political, "pachucos" were criticized for deviating from cultural norms that buttressed the twin powers of church and state, and were excoriated by institutional figures like Octavio Paz.[5]

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[1] Actually, the history of rock music has been a contentious one throughout Latin America, as historians note: "'Rock is not a crime.' This graffiti on a wall in Puerto Rico only makes sense when one understands that, for decades, Latin American rock fans and performers have been subject to a systematic pattern of harassment and abuses, under all forms of government—from Castro's Cuba to Pinochet's Chile—and ranging from outright government repression, to intellectual demonization and social ostracism." So write Deborah Pacini-Hernandez, Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste, and Eric Zolov in "Mapping Rock Music Cultures Across the Americas" in Rockin' Las Américas: The Global Politics of Rock in Latin/o America (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), 1.
[2] Eric Zolov, Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture (Berkeley: University of California, 1999).
[3] Regarding the history of rock music and youth culture in Mexico, there are several excellent sources on the subject, both in Spanish and in English. My own account leans most heavily on José Agustín's book on the Mexican counterculture because, while my interlocutors in the punk scene recommended most of the Spanish-language sources I cite, they reserved their highest praise for Agustín's work. See José Agustín, La Contracultura en México (México, D.F.: Random House Mondadori, 1996).
[4] Agustín, 18.
[5] Octavio Paz, "El pachuco y otros extremos" in El Laberinto de la Soledad, ed. Anthony Stanton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 43-57.

Continuing his transnational tale, Agustín recounts the various intellectual currents that formed the beat generation, several of whose primary figures spent significant time in Mexico. Their presence generated few adherents to a beat lifestyle, but furthered countercultural ties between the two nations. Then, in the 1950s, two circumstances greatly intensified this exchange. Firstly, rock n' roll made a big impact in Mexico, particularly among middle-class youth, who had better access to foreign products than their lower-resourced peers. By the late 1950s into the early 60s, local rock musicians were performing in the "cafés cantantes," sites where musicians and fans could meet to socialize and listen to "rocanrol," though their owners had to struggle to remain in business due to repression by the authorities.[6]

Secondly, European and North American scientists, who had known of the abundance of hallucinogenic plants in Mexico since the late 1930s, intensified their investigations into the mind-altering substances they contained. In 1957, this growing scientific and cultural interest in psychedelic experience resulted in a Life magazine story about María Sabina, an indigenous woman healer with intricate knowledge of the hallucinogenic mushrooms found in her native Huautla de Jiménez, a tiny pueblo situated in a remote part of Oaxaca, in southern Mexico. From then on, in addition to the visits of various investigators, Mexico increasingly became a hotspot for young North American "cazadores del hongo," or mushroom hunters. By the mid-1960s, María Sabina's little town had become so overrun with hippies that she claimed the

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[6] Many authors describe the environment of the "cafés cantantes" as singularly "innocent" in contrast to rock scenes that would emerge in the later 1960s. In interviews, people who participated in the "cafés cantantes" recall that cappuccinos and milkshakes were the beverages of choice. Rock musician Julia Palacios remembers that when she was eleven years of age, her mother would drop her off at their local "café cantante" around five in the afternoon and come by for her again at eight. Still, as Tere Estrada notes, "…despite the correct and proper behavior of the majority of the patrons, there were constant raids; the owners had to give bribes and frequently change locations." See Estrada, Sirenas al Ataque: Historia de las Mujeres Rockeras Mexicanas (México, D.F.: Océano, 2008), 48. All translations in this document are my own unless otherwise noted.

mushrooms had lost their powers, corrupted by the disrespectful practices of foreign youth.[7]

As Agustín reports, however, it was not just foreign youth who went mushroom hunting. Increasingly, young Mexicans joined their North American peers.[8] As opposed to "jipis," who were foreigners, these young people were called "jipitecas," an amalgam of "jipi" and "azteca," which symbolized their greater understanding and empathy for the indigenous Mexican cultures that had used hallucinogenic mushrooms for millennia.[9] Their interest in psychedelic experience was seen as motivated in part by an interest in their indigenous roots, based in a respect for indigenous culture not often witnessed in mainstream Mexican society.[10] However, rock—in English—was their music of choice.[11]

As the "jipitecas" were traveling in the Mexican countryside towards the late 1960s, young people, particularly in Mexico City, were gathering in a nascent student movement. While not necessarily part of "jipiteca" culture, many student protestors listened to rock music, smoked marijuana, and adopted stylistic trends such as long hair, to represent their rejection of officially sanctioned cultural values. Still, rock music

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[7] Agustín, 53-54.

[8] Agustín, 77. He writes, "In a country as rabidly racist as Mexico, it was truly a revolution that large sectors of young people identified and felt solidarity with the Indians. Only during the heyday of muralism, in the 30s, had there occurred something similar, but on a much smaller scale, when groups of nationalist intellectuals followed the Diego-Frida style, and manifested their admiration for the Indians."

[9] Ibid, 76. Agustín credits Enrique Marroquín, a Mexican priest and anthropologist who wrote La contracultura como protesta (1975), with coining the term.

[10] Perhaps because he does not consider the history of indigenismo in post-revolutionary Mexican culture, Zolov credits "jipitecas" with less agency than Agustín does, remarking that their adoption of indigenous cultural references was an "unwitting" effect of their imitation of North American hippies. "One might see this process as an ethnically complex double mirror: mestizo youth began to copy Anglo hippies who were copying indigenous Mexicans." To some extent, his argument accords with those of leftist Mexican critics who saw "jipitecas" as imitators of foreign culture. Zolov quotes prominent cultural critic Carlos Monsiváis, who decried the "Mexicanization of the hippies," for example. Despite agreeing that the "jipitecas" engaged in cultural imitation, Zolov concludes that their embrace of indigenous culture was an important political move that leftists missed. Zolov, 110-111.

[11] As elsewhere in the world, the so-called British Invasion reinvigorated rock music scenes in Mexico, though Zolov notes, "If the British invaded North America via the Atlantic, in Mexico they came via the Rio Grande" (93). Bands that performed songs like Beatles covers in English for North American tourists in border town nightclubs began to descend to Mexico City, fueling the transformation of "rocanrol" to rock in late 1964. While Mexican musicians had performed "refritos," Spanish-language versions of English-language rock 'n' roll songs, English-language lyrics were understood to be a key marker of rock music's authenticity. Zolov details this fascinating shift in chapters two and three of Refried Elvis.

was not the most popular music among the student movement.[12] Fueled in part by their resentment of English-language rock music performance in Mexico, leftist critics considered rock music as the latest imperialist intrusion and approved instead the revolutionary-nationalist cultural program promoted by Castro's regime in Cuba. As Pacini Hernandez, Fernández L'Hoeste, and Zolov comment:

> The clear association of rock 'n' roll with capitalist consumerism—patently evident during the 1960s—was logically anathema to the Left's revolutionary project, in Cuba and elsewhere, not only because of its association with U.S. imperialism but, more fundamentally, because rock—as a reflection of "bourgeois decadence"—threatened to deplete the virile energies of (potentially revolutionary) youth. ... By the end of the 1960s, music inspired by this vision, known variously as "nueva canción," "nueva trova," "canción protesta/politica," and "canción folclórica," could be heard throughout the hemisphere.[13]

Music historian Tere Estrada writes that during meetings of the student movement in 1968, the organizing committees would more commonly invite singers in the "canción de protesta" tradition than rock musicians to play for them. The university became a focal point for an emerging folk music scene, where musicians performed their own songs, influenced by Latin American folkloric traditions as well as the North American folk revival, epitomized by singers such as Pete Seeger and Joan Baez.[14]

On October 2nd of 1968, however, the student movement, which had been subject to increasing levels of repression and violence, sustained its most abrupt and brutal attack. Government agents opened fire on student protestors massed in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas at Tlatelolco in Mexico City. The death count is still unfixed today. In addition to multiple civilian deaths in the plaza, many hundreds of people were beaten and taken into police custody. Disappearances and torture subsequent to arrest were

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[12] Agustín, 83.
[13] Rockin' Las Américas, 10. Latin American fears of cultural imperialism were based in part on previous cultural programs fostered by the U.S. government. See Zolov, "A Critique of the 'Obvious Imperialist': The USIA" in Refried Elvis, 234-248 for an account of the government's use of cultural programming in Mexico as a way of promoting goodwill towards the United States, a tradition that began in the 1940s as part of a campaign of cultural information against the Axis powers during World War II.
[14] Estrada, 91-95.

reported following the massacre. Some surviving student leaders went into exile. The student movement immediately foundered, though protestors in various parts of Mexico continued meeting and tried one last time to assert their dissent in Mexico City in June of 1971. This time, the government sent paramilitary troops to meet them, which resulted in many more deaths, disappearances, and detentions during an event now remembered as the Corpus Christi Massacre or as Bloody Thursday.

According to Agustín, with overt political dissent having been closed off to them, many of the participants in the student movement voiced their outrage through cultural channels following the 1968 massacre. Thus "la onda" was born, a countercultural union of "jipitecas" and members of the defunct student movement.[15] A broad coalition of Mexican youth, "la onda" consisted of young people from all over Mexico, of various social classes and backgrounds.[16] Its signature moment was the Avándaro rock music festival, organized to be something of a Mexican Woodstock in 1971, but with important distinctions. The wealthy organizers had the permission of the governor of the state of Mexico, and the event was subject to heavy security. After the event, however, which though poorly organized was peaceful and well attended, the media launched a campaign against "la onda," scandalized by the freewheeling behavior of attendees. Leftists, who had always campaigned against rock music as a neo-colonialist infiltration, joined with governmental authorities in the criticism.[17]

Following Avándaro, rock music events and distributors were increasingly repressed by police and attacked in the press. Pacini Hernandez, Fernández L'Hoeste, and Zolov note that "…commercial rock venues and large concerts were effectively

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[15] Ibid. Augustín recounts that with the rise of "la onda," "the wave," the term "jipiteca" largely dropped out of use.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid, 88.

banned for more than a decade."[18] In the face of officially sanctioned police violence and media scorn, middle-class youth often abandoned their interest in rock music, which was driven underground.[19] It survived in the "hoyos fonquis," "funky holes," disused or abandoned properties that were quickly and temporarily taken over for packed, raucous, fly-by-night concerts, attended by youth from the poorest barrios in Mexico City.[20] It was among them that punk rock found its home towards the end of the 1970s.[21] Agustín comments:

> Towards 1974, there was a lot of talk, with an insistence that resembled a campaign, of the death of rock. Naturally, this was "wishful thinking" or the old trick of saying something to see if it will come true. What was clear was that a phase of the counterculture had been left behind, the romantic, peace-and-love of the '60s. The new phase was coming on particularly dark.[22]

The new generation of rock music fans not only rejected the utopian sentiment of the 1960s counterculture, they detested "jipismo" and "la onda."[23] Additionally, Mexico weathered a series of economic crises from the late 1970s onwards, which exacerbated poverty and income inequality, creating "cinturones de miseria," belts of extreme marginalization throughout the city.[24] While Mexico City's youth during the 1960s had largely ceased to form gangs, they rose again to prominence in the late 1970s into the 1980s. Augustín notes that they were formed by youth with diverse tastes and

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[18] Rockin' Las Américas, 2.
[19] Julia Palacios and Tere Estrada, "'A Contra Corriente': A History of Women Rockers in Mexico" in Rockin' Las Américas: The Global Politics of Rock in Latino/a America, ed. Deborah Pacini Hernandez, Héctor Fernández L'Hoeste, and Eric Zolov (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), 150.
[20] "Canción de protesta" continued to thrive, however. Palacios and Estrada write, "Only a few brave 'rockeros,' now relegated to the margins, learned to survive in the underground. The new musical spaces for politicized, urban, middle-class youth were the 'peñas.' There, one could listen to traditional Latin American folk songs and the so-called 'protesta' compositions of heroes such as Violeta Parra, Victor Jara, Atahualpa Yupanqui, Inti-Illimani, and Mercedes Sosa." Ibid.
[21] Punk was originally introduced to Mexico through middle-class youth, who had better access to goods from foreign markets. Among my interlocutors, those who had been part of the punk scene in its earliest days in the late 1970s told me that this was the case. Martiza Urteaga Castro-Pozo details this little-remembered moment in Mexican rock music history, cataloguing the adoption of punk by more economically marginalized youth in la Zona Metropolitana soon after its arrival in Mexico City. See Urteaga Castro-Pozo, Por Los Territorios del Rock: Identidades Juveniles y Rock Mexicano (México, D.F.: Culturas Populares y Causa Joven, 1998), 154-158.
[22] Augustín, 99. Augustín used the English phrase "wishful thinking" in his text.
[23] Ibid, 103.
[24] Castillo Berthier, 243.

interests, but in truth, "punk was a strong presence among the gangs."[25] This was reflected in their names, from the notorious Mierdas Punk to the Mugrosos, Vagos, Ratas Punk, Sex Leprosos, Apestosos, and Manchados.[26]

Some of these gangs grew to be enormous, their membership and influence extending over and across various barrios.[27] Police repression of economically marginal youth continued to be brutal, with riot police sent even to regular parties in the so-called "popular," i.e. poor, neighborhoods.[28] The government also tried to intervene in less forcible ways, such as through the creation of the Consejo Nacional de Recursos para la Atención de la Juventud (CREA), an organization that attempted to dissuade youth from gang life—as well as to mold them into upstanding members of the PRI, arguably—through cultural programming for young people, which ultimately included free rock concerts.[29]

Agustín notes that gang members themselves increasingly worked to address their problems with police brutality, forming coalitions and thus truces amongst themselves.[30] Little by little, he recounts, the violence and factionalism between gangs decreased, until many "bandas" became "la banda," a term used to connote a broad solidarity among lower-class youth.[31] A storied example of this solidarity was on display during the aftermath of the great earthquake of 1985, to which the government's response had been shockingly inadequate. Many thousands of people died in the

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[25] Agustín, 109. "En realidad lo punk era una presencia fuerte entre las bandas."
[26] Castillo Berthier, 246. The English translations of the gang names are: "The Punk Shits, The Filthies, The Vagrants, The Punk Rats, the Sex Lepers, The Stinkies, and The Stained."
[27] Personal communications. The size of notorious gangs like the Mierdas Punk or the Punks Not Dead were often the object of a great deal of speculation and likely exaggeration. I heard claims that the Mierdas Punk in their heyday contained hundreds of members, for example. Agustín remarks that punks were essentially nomadic in their habits, roaming the city and forming alliances beyond their own barrios. Agustín, 103.
[28] Agustín, 109-110.
[29] Castillo Berthier, 247. CREA stands for, in English, the National Advisory Board of Resources for Youth Attention. Regarding its reception among "la banda," Castillo Berthier recounts that some revealed their doubts through a play on the organization's name, calling it "no crea," which can be understood as meaning both "doesn't create" and "don't believe" (248).
[30] Agustín, 110. This is a story the contemporary punk scene tells about itself. A few of my interlocutors told me that the collectives that punks formed in the 1980s were initially created from former gangs.
[31] Ibid, 110-111.

earthquake, and thousands more were trapped in the rubble of scores of damaged buildings mostly in and around the Centro Histórico. Many of the same young people who comprised "la banda" joined fellow citizens in forming brigades, rescuing survivors and performing other kinds of relief. Agustín quotes Mexican novelist Elena Poniatowska:

> At the moment of truth, the 'chavos banda' are ready to risk their lives. They are afraid of nothing and they are much more generous than many who believe themselves examples to follow….They showed more than their human qualities….[They made one see] that their organization, always marginal, always rejected by society, serves for something.[32]

In addition to economic crisis and the PRI government's mismanagement of the earthquake's aftermath, the obvious electoral fraud that brought Carlos Salinas de Gortari to power as Mexico's president in 1988 also revealed the depth of the turmoil that was beginning to roil the ruling party. During this contentious cultural and political climate of the 1980s, the Tianguis Cultural del Chopo came into being. It began in 1980 under the name Primer Tianguis de Publicaciones Culturales y Discos, the brainchild of music enthusiasts who wanted a space to meet and accumulate popular music.[33] Originally held within the Chopo Museum, by 1982, the market's success was becoming a bother for the museum, attracting a much larger-than-anticipated crowd. So, the market became a "tianguis," moving outdoors, where it soon occupied the entire street.

Once in the street, the market attracted the attention of people beyond the somewhat elite group that had founded it, as youth from all over the city and metropolitan zone began to attend. In addition to a demographic shift, with the arrival of "la banda" came the practice of trading:

> The craziest ones bought records at unthinkable prices while 'la banda' opted for exchange now not only of music, but a necklace for a book, a poster for a

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[32] Ibid, 111. The quote comes from Elena Poniatowska, Nada, nadie: las voces del temblor (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1988).
[33] In English, the "First Market for Cultural Publications and Records."

'quemabachas' (device for smoking the stub of a cigarette without burning oneself).[34]

The move to the street, with its attendant increase in livelier visitors caused problems between the market and its neighbors, who soon began to complain to authorities. For the next few years, the "tianguis" would be threatened with dissolution, forced to relocate several times. Finally in 1985, market-goers decided to organize, and held a rally outside the home of La Jornada, the city's most left-leaning newspaper, which began to plead the market's case to the public. The problems subsided somewhat but were not fully resolved, and with organization, changes came to the "tianguis." Rules were established regarding the ownership and use of "puestos," and an internal committee attempted to quash the consumption of alcohol and drugs within the market. Organizers then created the Asociación Civil, a body founded to defend the "tianguis" from legal problems, and El Tianguis Cultural del Chopo was reborn under its current name.

Historian of the Chopo market, Abraham Ríos Manzano comments on the advantages and disadvantages that the market incurred from this organizational move:

> The association is intended to be a legal instrument to confront the market's problems, to spread rock culture and to make society see that rockers have a right to exist. The affiliates of the association create norms and criteria for the market's functioning, but because of the structure of the association, members see only themselves, and from there a problem appeared that to this day exists: the displacement of the decision-making capacity and legitimacy of those who believe in exchange…The organization…began to limit the field of action for this large sector of the Chopo.[35]

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[34] Abraham Ríos Manzano, Tianguis Cultural del Chopo: Una Larga Jornada (México, D.F.: Programa de Apoyo a las Culturas Municipales y Comunitarias (PACMYC), 1999), 27. While here Ríos Manzano seems to link trading to pragmatism on the part of less economically privileged Chopo attendees, the practice became an important ideological marker to distinguish between Chopo regulars. In the punk scene, it became theorized through the lens of the anarchist/mutualist practices of DIY exchange, which I will discuss further in the following chapter.
[35] Ríos Manzano, 38.

Indeed, Hector Castillo Berthier sees the founding of the Chopo as an important moment in rock music's "slow but steady return toward the middle classes."[36] Regarding that shift, Castillo Berthier remarks:

> Two key rock performers deserve mention here, for each created a bridge between the youth of the "bandas" and the middle classes, who were returning to national rock after a hiatus of more than a decade. The first is Alex Lora, founder and lead performer of El Tri, Mexico's longest-running rock group. … The second was Rodrigo "Rockdrigo" González… José Agustín described Rodrigo González in 1983 as someone who had "achieved what is, for me, an extraordinary accomplishment: making Spanish sound perfect, truly natural in rock and roll."[37]

The stage was thus set for the rise of "rock en español" in the mid- to late 1980s. The Mexican music market was initially inundated during that time with rock music imports from Spain and Argentina as "rock en español" became popular among middle-class youth, though later, a small handful of Mexican rock bands, such as Maldita Vecindad and Caifanes, were given the opportunity to record on Mexican labels.[38]

As a sociologist and resident of Mexico City, Castillo Berthier recounts this shift in rock music's class associations as a moment in which he participated in securing locations for youth expression, resulting ultimately in the founding of a space called the Circo Volador. As the project got underway in the late 1980s, he comments that he and his associates petitioned the PRI government for use of a public radio station targeted not to middle-class youth, but to "la banda." They were granted a two-hour slot each week, featuring local, Mexican rock music and a call-in request line.[39] While Castillo Berthier sees this development as a boon for the appreciation of "street corner culture" by the young people who produced it, as well as by social researchers like himself, some of my own interlocutors who were young adults at the time remember the radio show as

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[36] González died in the 1985 earthquake, but El Tri remains a fixture of Mexican popular culture to this day. In 2009, I was part of a large and enthusiastic body of fans that attended its 40th anniversary concerts.
[37] Castillo Berthier, 248-250.
[38] Urteaga Castro-Pozo, 130.
[39] Castillo Berthier, 254-259.

another element in authoritarian efforts to co-opt marginalized youth. Despite being intertwined with punk in the history of rock music in Mexico, "rock en español" came to be regarded as "fresa" among many of the participants of Mexico City's punk scene that I came to know.

Due in part to a sense of marginalization at the Tianguis Cultural del Chopo, in the late 1990s, punks were emboldened to make their own organizational moves within the market, protesting the hegemony of the Asociación Civil. Their struggles, which included some physical fighting and police action, eventually resulted in their current use of the space dubbed the Espacio Anarkopunk.[40] The practice of trading in the market at large has also been revived to some extent in recent years, as those who want to hold weekly swap meets are now encouraged to use a small space near the Espacio Anarcopunk, beyond all the "puestos" at the back of the market. The Tianguis Cultural del Chopo is for these and other reasons a singular social space in the city, and a great place to discover who Mexico City's punks are, in all of their consistencies and contradictions.

3.2 Rockers and Radicals: Divisions Among "La Banda Punk"

Divisions in Mexico City's punk scene date back a long way, back at least to the emergence of hardcore punk in the 1980s while rock music in Mexico was also making its slow shift back into middle-class graces, as Castillo Berthier recounts. To some extent, the split between rock and punk that occurred in Mexico happened also on a global level. The antics of the British punk band, the Sex Pistols, and similar punk rock bands, had created marketing and image problems for the global music industry. Additionally, the aesthetic of the punk rock music that began to emerge around 1980 was more

[40] For a detailed account of this process, see Ríos Manzano.

extreme—structurally simplified, faster, and noisier—and so less amenable to marketing strategies that had been created to promote the elaborate, often virtuosic hard rock of the late 1960s and 70s. Rejected by music industry executives in the United Kingdom and the United States as an unprofitable sub-genre of rock music at the end of the 1970s, punk went underground, a "second wave" emerging around 1979.[41]

These circumstances all encouraged the development of a global, Do-It-Yourself punk scene, with its own networks independent of the music industry.[42] By that point, punk musicians and fans in scenes around the world were establishing what we now recognize as DIY creative production, founding their own record labels, fanzines, and distribution channels, keeping in touch with people in distant places initially through the mail. In Mexico City, a DIY approach to the trappings of punk had been a necessity from the beginning for less privileged fans in the barrios. While the middle-class youth who initially fostered local interest in punk music and fashion in Mexico City had ample recordings, ready instruments with which to form bands, and wore clothing imported from London, the economically marginalized young people interested in punk had to find creative ways of making their own music, clothing, and accessories.

Punk music was not to be found on Mexican radio or television at the time, so they took their inspiration from performances by short-lived middle-class punk bands like Dangerous Rhythm and Size, as well as from a couple of local magazines that were produced by the same participants in the city's musical vanguard, publications called

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[41] George Hurchalla, Going Underground: American Punk 1979-1992 (Stuart, FL: Zuo Press, 2005). An underground punk scene continued to thrive in Great Britain as well, but the music industry paid it little attention. Punk genres continued to flourish through independent networks until the 1990s, when music industry executives became alerted to grunge, a new sub-genre of rock that incorporated elements of punk. On the rise of grunge and the controversy caused by renewed music industry interest in what had been an underground scene, see Steve Waksman, This Ain't the Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover in Heavy Metal and Punk (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

[42] Alan O'Connor, Punk Record Labels and the Struggle for Autonomy: The Emergence of DIY (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008). O'Connor demonstrates the gradual nature of the transition to a DIY mentality among punks in North America especially, noting that early punk musicians were quite diverse in their methodologies and experimented with various ways of recording and performing. Additionally, some early hardcore bands like Black Flag and The Dead Kennedys initially had deals with small labels that distributed through the major record companies.

Conecte and Sonido.[43] At the Chopo market, punk fans swapped cassette recordings.[44] Urteaga Castro-Pozo also recounts tales recorded in the 1990s during interviews with a few members of the early punk scene, in which her interlocutors discussed how they made their own t-shirts, buttons, and other accessories that in addition to wearing, they sold in the huge outdoor markets in Tepito.[45] Regarding the fleeting interest in punk among middle-class youth, Urteaga Castro-Pozo remarks:

> No one knows exactly when the first groups of punk rock…disappeared. What is certain is that this occurrence happened very quickly; the "fresas" soon grew bored with the musical simplicity so characteristic of punk rock. … It is known that Dangerous Rhythm transformed itself into Ritmo Peligroso—representative of rock latino in the Mexican eighties—, la Kenny and the Electrics into Kenny y sus Eléctricos, who in 1984-1985 reached first place in popularity as a 1980s rock/pop group.[46]

In addition to the informal circulation of music and other products among punk musicians and fans in Mexico City, communications channels emerged that helped to link the burgeoning punk scene in Mexico City, centered most particularly at the Tianguis Cultural del Chopo, and the punk scene in the Mexico-U.S. border city of Tijuana. While technically not a venue for punk performance or any musical performance specifically, the Tianguis Cultural del Chopo had become a popular meeting place for punks and various "sub-cultural" youth groups. In the case of punk, which had had no certain home, despite the existence of bands in several parts of Mexico City and most

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[43] Urteaga Castro-Pozo, 155.

[44] During my time hanging out in the punk scene, recordings were largely distributed in CD format, as CD burning had become accessible to "la banda." The accessibility of this technology also fuels the huge rates of media piracy that occur in Mexico more broadly. See John C. Cross, "Mexico" in Media Piracy in Emerging Economies, ed. Joe Karaganis (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2011), accessed online at http://www.ssrc.org/features/view/media-piracy-in-emerging-economies/. A small number of my acquaintances among the more elite members of the contemporary scene traded recordings on vinyl. At the very end of my stay, there was also a nostalgic revival of cassettes, as vendors in the Chopo began to reissue recordings from the first generation of local punk on actual cassette tapes, which reportedly sold well among "la banda punk."

[45] Urteaga Castro-Pozo, 158. Among Urteaga Castro-Pozo's interviewees who reminisced about the early days of punk, I recognize a few "apodos," the nicknames of older-generation punks who continued to be active in the punk scene during my own fieldwork period. The age range of my interlocutors was actually quite broad. In addition to the small number of 40 to 50 year-olds who had been part of the scene from the beginning, several participants were of my own age, in their late 20s and 30s. There was also a large number of young people in their late teens and early 20s. The people who befriended me and who were my best informants were mostly, though not exclusively, my age-mates.

[46] Ibid, 159.

particularly in the metropolitan zones, the "tianguis" gave punks a weekly place to meet and share ideas and recordings. It also provided a place where people from other states could visit. Visitors from Tijuana in particular were recognized as being the new, specifically punk vanguard, having access to the latest information about North American and European bands.[47] Some of my interlocutors also recall that in the 1990s, before the implementation of stricter U.S. border control, it was fairly easy to cross the border into the United States to attend punk shows, especially in Southern California.

As the means of communication and distribution for punk rock changed during the 1980s, so did the music itself continue to change, from punk rock into the faster, more furious, and more ideologically driven hardcore punk. Increasingly, bands did away with verse-chorus formats, creating shorter songs that seemed all the faster for being executed in a quick two-four time. Some songs utilized time and tempo shifts to create jarring effects, alternating slower sections in four-four time with the faster two. Vocalists developed a shouting technique rather than delivering their material through the strained but still melodious techniques of rock singing. Instrumentalists too favored a noisier, more distorted sound. Not only did the tempos quicken and the distortion level grow, the messages communicated in the lyrics of hardcore punk increasingly tended to focus on social and political issues. Some consistent themes in the early 1980s were human rights, the problems of the global South, and animal and ecological welfare.[48]

The production and distribution of DIY fanzines also increased during this time, as a means of sharing information not only about bands and their music, but also for publishing song lyrics and articles on topics that songs might address. Style remained an important marker of group identity, but for those who had tired of what they saw as the

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[47] Urteaga Castro-Pozo, 168.
[48] Ibid.

overly destructive character of early punk rock, it was also important to keep oneself in the know on a variety of issues with which a hardcore punk would need to be conversant.

During the 1980s, the Tijuana people initially had the scoop on hardcore punk, being close to the North American scene and privy to material flowing in from across the border. While punks from Mexico City began to journey to Tijuana and even to the United States, with greater frequency, in addition to keeping in touch via the mail, there was reportedly a certain degree of snobbishness on the part of many of the Tijuana punks directed towards those from Mexico City.[49] As Urteaga Castro-Pozo writes, not only did "tijuanenses" have access to more current music and information coming from North America and Europe, they also could suggest their superiority to "chilangos" by emphasizing how they dressed like first-world punks, wearing such coveted items as Doc Martens boots, which were not sold in Mexico at that time.[50]

If there was both friendship and rivalry between the punks of Tijuana and the punks of Mexico City, the same kind of competition began to occur within the group in Mexico City itself. By the mid-1980s, the scene in the city not only had its own successful hardcore bands that performed both at home and away in other locations in Mexico, but also had formed some small collectives that published their own fanzines.[51] The scene's recognized elite around 1985-1986 were most likely a group called the PND, short for Punks Not Dead, which published a short-lived fanzine titled Falso Magazine.

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[49] Many of my interlocutors characterized early punk as overly destructive, and labeled punks who still enjoyed that genre and its associated style "destroy" punks. Urteaga Castro-Pozo recounts similar ideas and terms in her chapters on punk. She writes: "…los de Tijuana los veían a los del DeFectuoso como 'ignorantes,' 'más atrasados,' 'viciosos,' y no podían cotorrear mucho entre sí" (170).

[50] Ibid, 171.

[51] Alan O'Connor notes that the formation of "collectives" in Mexico City's punk scene is one of the ways that it differs from punk scenes in other locations around the world. See O'Connor, "Local Scenes and Dangerous Crossroads: Punk and Theories of Cultural Hybridity" in Popular Music, vol. 21, no. 2 (2002), 225-236. Those participants in Mexico City's scene who want to work together on cultural and political projects typically form collective organizations. These may be long-term organizations or short-term ones created to shepherd a particular project to fruition. Some collectives attempt to live together in collective living arrangements, but the cost of rent and the difficulties of squatting deter many. The majority of my interlocutors lived with their families, including those who participated in collectives.

Urteaga Castro-Pozo details a graphic spread in the fanzine that she feels illustrates the group's urge for dominance within the scene, but that also points up the continuing struggle to encourage reform among the many punks who did not embrace the hardcore lifestyle, adhering instead to an older view of what it meant to be punk:

> In the first [drawing] appears a really crazy guy with his boom box, dressed all punk in the style of the Sex Pistols. It's the idea of punk as party. In the second drawing, there is a pot-bellied punk with donkey's ears against a backdrop with the title Falso Magazine. The idea is "a lot of style, little knowledge." And the third one has a punk guy dressed stylishly with the logo of the PND on his lapel.[52]

Mexico City's "hardcore" punks, while not relinquishing their ability to shock through their music and sense of style, were supposedly tired of the non-stop party, tired of being labeled delinquents, drug addicts, and ne'er-do-wells. Urteaga Castro-Pozo believes that they examined their social conscience, and attempted to use punk culture to express their ideas on social justice themes.

The fact that punk went underground and "hardcore" did not eradicate all of its original meanings, practices, sounds, and symbols, however. In present-day Mexico City, the confluence of various practices provides fuel for a continuing discourse over what it means to be punk, which has to do with disagreements about what are the best listening practices and musical preferences, clothing and other body-grooming styles, degrees of involvement with social justice issues, forms and frequency of drug-taking, social practices such as involvement with friendship groups or collectives, type of work or study one pursues, and more. Certain choices may be frowned upon as backwards and ignorant by one sub-group, while that sub-group may sneer back at the other that they are hopeless "fresas."

In fact, many of the hurdles that stood in the way at the beginning of Mexican punks' quest for information on the wider global scene appear to create divisions among

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[52] Ibid, 175.

punks within the city today. Not only is international travel much more difficult for Mexican citizens, but also language has always been an obstacle that those with better educational resources, or who have lived or traveled in foreign countries, may surmount much more easily than their peers. While many suppose that the Internet democratizes the process of seeking out information, this is only partially true in a country like Mexico, where even now, Internet access, affordability, and know-how may be privileges rather than certainties. Though many local punks have email accounts, these may or may not be an easy means of contact, as Internet connection may well be spotty and accessed in public spaces like Internet cafes, rather than in the comfort and round-the-clock ease of private homes. Thus, the distinction between how punks define what punk is often seems to be informed by gradations in social class and the kinds of cultural capital that one may accrue in part through such positioning. While it is highly unusual to find someone of a solidly middle- or upper-class background hanging out in the punk scene, some of Mexico City's punks do have more resources than others.

In addition to subtle differences in class positioning between participants in the punk scene, gender provides another contentious difference. Women have been participating in Mexico City's punk scene since it began, but with difficulty and in small numbers. Two female chroniclers of Mexico City's rock and punk scenes, Tere Estrada and Maritza Urteaga Castro-Pozo, have attempted to shine a light on women's participation. Urteaga Castro-Pozo discusses the creation of an all women's collective called CHAP'S in 1987, and Estrada publishes an extended interview with la Zappa Punk, a vocalist who has been performing in the punk scene since the early 1980s.[53] Notably, both accounts center on the same small group of women, friends and

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[53] See Estrada, 182-185 and Urteaga Castro-Pozo, 181-185. Estrada's work with la Zappa Punk may also be found in the essay she wrote in collaboration with Julia Palacios, "A Contra Corriente" in Rockin' Las Américas, 155-157.

associates of la Zappa Punk.[54] While Estrada and Urteaga Castro-Pozo agree that women's participation in the punk scene is particularly interesting for the way that it breaks with conventions of feminine deportment prized in mainstream Mexican society, they also chronicle the backlash that women punks experience from their male peers in "la banda punk."[55] Despite punk scene participants' rhetoric regarding their tolerance for difference, many of the same kinds of negative attitudes to women's full participation in the punk scene that Estrada and Urteaga Castro-Pozo recounted were evident during my own experience.

Women's aesthetic choices and small differences in class also serve to create less cohesion among the few female participants in the punk scene than there might once have been. The women I knew among the more elite sub-group of the punk scene were less familiar with the work of la Zappa Punk and the history she represented.[56] As a member of the "banda antaña," or older-generation punks, la Zappa conforms to earlier generic musical forms and aspects of self-presentation. But as DIY distribution links knit punk scenes tighter globally throughout the 1980s and into the 90s, hardcore punk itself underwent further change, fusing with various emergent forms of extreme metal such as thrash and death metal, among others.[57] Punk, as a global music genre, also continued to diversify in different places in the 1990s, blending with other genres like pop or acoustic music, largely according to circumstances in local scenes as well as

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[54] From my own experience, I believe that the focus on the same small group of women was born of necessity. La Zappa Punk was indeed still performing during my own period of fieldwork. In addition to being a commanding performer, it was clear that she was a role model for some of the younger women who participated in the scene, though she remains one among a very small group of female musicians.
[55] Estrada writes that she is "in agreement with the investigator Maritza Urteaga that the image of the woman punk makes a much greater impact than that of the woman rocker; it's much more aggressive in symbolic terms" (182). Despite highlighting the "symbolism" through which women punks enact their differences from sanctioned femininity, Estrada prints a photograph on the following page that depicts a female member of the punk scene in an aggressive posture, her hand in a fist, being restrained by another woman friend (185).
[56] In 2010, I worked with a temporary collective of women who created a festival in celebration of International Women's Day. The group represented a fairly broad coalition of women in the punk scene, and La Zappa Punk was invited to perform. While everyone knew who she was, there were women who had either not seen her perform, or had attended her performances once or twice at most.
[57] Waksman, This Ain't the Summer of Love.

factors due to the impact of transnational circulation.[58] The hardcore punk of the 1980s began to sound retro, though it remains popular in Mexico City today, along with an even more historically grounded punk-rock sound. A large body of the city's punks still prefers the sound of hardcore punk, while another group embraces more metal-infused punk subgenres. In Mexico City, some participants in the punk scene have taken an interest in extreme metal sub-genres like death metal, as well as in fusions of punk and metal in sub-genres like crust punk since the 1990s. During my own fieldwork period, the production of music clearly described as punk-metal crossover seemed to increase markedly in popularity.[59]

To some extent, all participants in the punk scene listen to one another's music, but a preference for one sub-genre or the other is a strong factor that shapes an individual's participation both within the punk scene and in the wider "banda." As in the 1980s, ease of access to transnational punk scenes helps to create such distinctions. Those who adhere to older genres and styles of punk are less likely to include foreign musical guests as their friends, and less likely to sustain a charge that they are "fresas." Nevertheless, they may be frowned upon for their supposedly "destroy punk" practices, viewed as holdovers from the early years of Mexico City's more contested rock and punk scenes. In addition to their musical tastes, those punk scene participants who embrace a punk-metal fusion also tend to emphasize the "radical" nature of their political commitments, in opposition to the hedonistic or wantonly destructive behavior

[58] See O'Connor, "Local Scenes and Dangerous Crossroads."

[59] I will return to closer considerations of sound and musical genre in later chapters. For now, I note that when I first began my investigations in the punk scene in late 2008, I heard a great deal of complaint that it was in a slump. Indeed, a few key musicians in the scene were between projects during the majority of my stay. By the end of it, in November 2011, they had found new avenues for their musical creativity, creating new bands while other older bands had also transformed themselves, some of the defunct ones coming back to life. Almost all of these bands, comprised of long-term punk scene participants, were clearly working with metal as well as punk aesthetics.

of which they accuse the "destroy punks."[60] These divisions between "rockers" and "radicals," as well as the struggles of women who want to participate fully in the scene, are often at the heart of day-to-day conflicts and arguments between members of a social network who ostensibly prize the broad solidarity of "la banda."

3.3 Urban Tribes: Representations of Youth Culture in Modern Mexico City

The population of Mexico is currently dominated by the very young. Not surprisingly in such a context, youth culture continues to be a frequent site of attention and anxiety, of journalistic scrutiny and government intervention. In recent years, there has been a great deal of debate about the so-called "lost generation," the "ninis," young people who neither work nor study ("ni trabajan ni estudian").[61] Burdened with economic need but faced with bleak education and job prospects, "ninis" are thought to be easy pickings for criminal organizations that exploit youth labor.[62] To many, "ninis" present the new face of the old problem of delinquency in Mexico City, but the specter of anti-social youth now threatens the public in a different way—with prolonging and extending the extreme violence of the "war on drugs."

Several times over the course of my fieldwork, I saw camera crews at the edges of "la banda punk," and some of the punks I knew had been on television more than once. Many people told me that they distrusted such attention, that generally news stories

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[60] In addition to the label "destroy punk," punk scene participants who prefer a more retro, hardcore sound may be called "rockers." I adopt the terminology of "rockers" and "radicals" from a prominent member of the punk scene, the owner of the club El Clandestino, who used the terms in interviews for the documentary series Esquizofrenia, which I discuss in the next section. Though I don't necessarily agree with these characterizations of the two networks within the punk scene, I do find it helpful to use terminology of difference created by scene participants themselves.
[61] The age range and number of ninis varies according to different reports. Generally, ninis are thought to be between 12 and 29 years of age, and total between 7 and 10 million people in an overall population of roughly 113,500,000 Mexicans.
[62] See for example José Blanco, "Ninis" in La Jornada, January 5, 2010, http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2010/01/05/opinion/012a1pol, accessed 21 February, 2012.

were negative or deeply misrepresented the alternative cultures they sought to explain. A few seemed quite content to cavort for the cameras, even as they conceded that the results were usually disappointing. Many others—especially among the "radicals"—refused to participate all together.

A recent example of this journalistic body of work, "Ecatepec: El Microclima del Punk," forms part of the Esquizofrenia series, which airs on Canal 22, Mexico City's "cultural channel."[63] Set up more as a celebration than a condemnation of youth culture, the show's website promises to leave viewers with a desire to know more about the alternative scene, the "B Side" of city culture. Each half-hour episode focuses on some aspect of youth culture in Mexico City, from the resurgence in popularity of "pulque" to music in the Metro to investigation of various "tribus urbanas," a term coined by sociologist Michel Maffesoli to describe contemporary social trends, but appropriated also by the Mexican media.[64] These brief documentaries feature quick interviews with scene insiders and academic or media experts, and the voice-over of a female narrator who speaks in a strangely tense, hushed tone as though the camera crew were stalking skittish prey on the Serengeti. Styled with choppy, fast-paced editing and cartoon graphics, Esquizofrenia is a light, fun entertainment, laced with the bizarre.

The episode that deals most specifically with punk, "Ecatepec: El Microclima del Punk" is set in a part of the metropolitan zone nicknamed "Ecatepunk" because it is home to many punks and punk cultural institutions, such as El Clandestino, the club where I did a good portion of my own fieldwork.[65] Several accounts of punk in Mexico City have alternatively been set in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, another municipality famous

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[63] Equizofrenia: "El Microclima del Punk," http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaRtaPzadxk, accessed 8 September, 2011.
[64] Michel Maffesoli, The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society (London: Sage Publications, 1996).
[65] Ecatepec is a municipality in the Estado de México, part of the Metropolitan Area of Mexico City, but not part of the Distrito Federal proper. It borders the delegation Gustavo Madero, which is part of the Distrito Federal, and in which the Colonia San Felipe de Jesús is located. Part of the Esquizofrenia show takes place in a famous tianguis there.

for its thriving punk population.[66] Commentators with a more profound knowledge of youth culture in Mexico have noted how "subcultures" like punk actually tend to transcend any one location in the city.[67] Still, Esquizofrenia's producers adhere to the stereotypical notion that "urban tribes" are linked with their specific territories.[68] The show's title might suggest that Ecatepec represents one part of a broader "punk climate," but its producers use the concept of the urban tribe to separate out different kinds of youth cultures in Ecatepec that may be more or less related to punk.

This guiding concept of the "tribu urbana" is crudely introduced at the very beginning of the show, which opens with "prehistoric Ecatepec," allegedly home to mammoths and cave men.[69] Stretching the cave man metaphor to modern day "urban tribes," the show features not only punks but also a brief series of clips about reggaetón fans in Ecatepec, which suggest that punks and "reggaetoneros" are rival urban tribes. Moreover, reggaetón is represented as a newer, possibly cooler tribe, now attracting more young people than punk and therefore pointing towards a development in the show's posited "tribal" evolution.

The insistence on "history" also surfaces prominently through the musical choices used to represent punk over the course of the episode. While claiming that the purpose of the series Esquizofrenia is to present the latest in alternative culture, the music does not fully represent today's Mexican punk. Apart from some very brief interviews and seconds-long clips of performances by Muertos por el Sistema and la Zappa Punk, veteran punk musicians from Ecatepec and San Felipe de Jesús respectively, the music is

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[66] See Nadie Es Inocente, Sara Mintner, dir., México, D.F., 1986, 81 minutes.
[67] See, for example, Agustín.
[68] Esquizofrenia: "El Microclima del Punk," http://www.canal22.org.mx/esquizofrenia/blog/?p=13, accessed 9 August, 2011. "In Mexico City urban tribes often express themselves according to their territory. In the case of punk, the geography that corresponds to this form of being would be the northwest metropolitan area of the capital, especially Ecatepec and the colonia San Felipe de Jesús…"
[69] This type of "tribal" metaphor is quite a stretch from the ways in which Maffesoli, who coined the term "urban tribe," meant it. Still, it is not an uncommon device in writing that embraces the concept.

either less than current or from other places entirely.[70] The background music, for example, includes three Mexican bands but is largely drawn from the international world of 1990s hardcore punk, most particularly from Spain. There are two extended interviews with musicians, one with Polo Pepo, a mature performer from the city's earliest days of punk, and The Casualties of New York, who have been on the international scene since 1990 and visited Mexico City during the documentary's filming.[71] The documentary's music thus focuses on the aesthetic preferences and social practices of the "rocker" sub-group within the scene, including not one example of music from the "metal-punk" favored by others. In addition to perpetuating stereotypes of punk youth as members of a violent "urban tribe," this style of representation ignores the differences among people who participate in the punk scene.

Despite the largely pejorative way in which the press covers what they call the urban tribes, that appellation may be withheld from other youth social networks in an attempt to represent them as also deviant, but with echoes of the gendered and classed condemnation of "jipis" and "jipitecas" in the 1960s. In the past several years, the term "emo" has become a new label for Mexican youth, generally affixed to very young teenagers who embrace a certain style—skintight pants, lots of black and pink and glitter, dramatic make-up on both boys and girls, long lank bangs—and supposedly, behaviors that suggest a morose, depressive character. In Querétaro, in the spring of 2009, several kids thought to be emo were chased and beaten by local toughs looking to push them out of the city's main plaza. Copy-cat attacks then occurred in other cities, including Mexico City. Commentators weighed in on both sides, fueling resentment

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[70] Muertos por el Sistema have been around for almost a decade, and are the newest band featured directly on the show. La Zappa Punk belongs to Mexico City's first generation of punk musicians, and has been performing since at least the early 1980s. The most current musical item on the show forms part of the background music, a song by the local, contemporary DIY punk band, Desafiando Autoridad.

[71] Polo Pepo, having recorded an album in 2006, is said to have disappeared from the scene subsequently. The Casualties include two members with Latin American roots, and play a style of "street punk" that is a deliberate look back to earlier forms of punk rock.

towards emos or towards "urban tribes" thought to be at the root of the aggression, especially punks.

In Mexico City, further confrontations followed. There was a face-off between "emos" and various other youth in the Glorieta del Insurgentes, a favored place for loitering in the vast cement rotary that encircles the Metro station, a link to the pink line and some of the more comfortable neighborhoods in the city center. There was continued debate on what it meant that youth took up the "emo" posture, some railing against the emos, whom they accused of gender bending. Some critics blamed the government for lack of youth opportunity or the collapse of the traditional Mexican family for trouble with "urban tribes," while gay-rights groups actively supported and lobbied for the emos, having found a disturbingly gendered, anti-gay subtext in much of the negative representation of them. Ultimately, there was a flood of support for emos, pouring in from various countries around the world, as well as from within Mexico.

In an attempt to restore the peace and project a cosmopolitan, tolerant image, city officials organized a march for emo kids and their supporters, which would start at the Glorieta and pass to the Chopo market on a Saturday afternoon. The march was heavily policed, a factor that reportedly caused great anger on the part of "la banda," who may or may not have harbored negative feelings toward emo kids. Violence at the edge of the Chopo market, where the marchers passed, was narrowly avoided. [72]

Rehashing these events from the recent past, my companions found it suspicious that emos should have received police support and so much sympathetic media coverage. They attributed this alleged deference to class bias. Emos are generally believed to come from the middle class, and my friends felt that this fact secured positive attention from what they believe to be a mainstream, bourgeois press. They

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[72] Daniel Hernandez, Down and Delirious in Mexico City: The Aztec Metropolis in the Twenty-first Century (New York: Scribner, 2011), 92.

bandied around the notion that perhaps "porros," or government stooges, had been the ones to beat up on the emos in an attempt to discredit other "urban tribes," and punks in particular, their history of confrontation with police providing the fodder for many tales. Finally, they admitted that members of "la banda" had participated in anti-emo attacks. But these were not really punks. "Rockers," perhaps, but not punks.[73]

In all of the press that buzzed around the conflict, some distinctive ideas emerged about emos. In the leftist newspaper La Jornada (March 21, 2008), sociologists and psychologists denied emos "tribu urbana" status and put forward some rather incredible statistics, such as that 40% of emos display suicidal tendencies. Héctor Castillo Berthier voiced the opinion (also in La Jornada, March 26, 2008), that while all "countercultural movements" begin as styles, emo was a superficial and passing fancy that would not transform itself into something more socially relevant, but simply fade away in time. UNAM psychology professor Bertha Bloom concurred with Castillo, calling emos mere "products of marketing," highlighting their purportedly more consumerist nature, particularly through the claim that they pursue the trappings of emo style on the Internet. In the same article, various other academics discussed the risk of suicide and other psychological dangers attendant on self-identifying as emo.

These critiques are strongly reminiscent of the discourse on "jipismo" that occurred in the late 1960s, when voices both on the left and right united to denounce what was perceived to be a largely middle-class youth culture. Tellingly, "jipitecas'" supposedly gender-bending appearance formed a major part of the criticism then as well. The popularity of rock music among Mexican youth has always been contentious, its lyrics, dance forms, and other aspects of its youth-oriented focus from the beginning

[73] The term "rocker," like the term "destroy," may be used by some members of the punk scene to "other" a different set of participants, as I have described above. Nevertheless, the use of the term is a confusing one too because it may be used in other contexts, to denote older-generation rock fans or even to emphasize the excellence of a musician who is a good "rocker," for example. Here, I think the ambiguity of the term works well to illustrate the complexity of maintaining solidarity among members of "la banda punk."

clashing with the "buenas costumbres" that formed the bedrock of official Mexican culture, dominating social life particularly in the 1950s and early '60s as "rocanrol" arrived. Grounded in the ruling PRI party's claims to a revolutionary past, these practices supported the virile culture of a patriarchal state, particularly in the capital city.

Ballooning exponentially at mid century, Mexico City saw a small rise in its middle class, but also burgeoning rates of poverty and marginality. Undercutting the government's assertions that it had created a "Mexican miracle,"[74] these problems intensified social divisions:

> In the capital, the proliferation of an urban underclass not only altered the architecture of the city by introducing the shantytown in the midst of capitalist progress but furthermore, posed an affront to the very notion of order that lay at the heart of the patriarchal state. The poor were seen as dis-orderly by middle-class society, not only in their lack of material wealth but also, and more fundamentally, in their lack of "buenas costumbres," a class- and gender-laden notion implying "proper upbringing."[75]

The scope of "buenas costumbres" spanned social, sexual, and religious issues particularly, including unwritten rules about proper behavior and dress. In his account of "jipismo" in Mexico, Eric Zolov quotes a woman who aspired towards "jipismo" exactly because of the challenge it posed to standards of decency for women:

> "The new fashions were very tempting. It was a change that liberated you from being 'properly dressed,' with your clothes always being ironed, a handbag, a ribbon in your hair. The hippie was totally carefree in appearance, and you tried to adopt that aspect to a certain point…."[76]

Newspaper articles mocked the "jipitecas" for this relaxed style, often claiming that it was growing impossible to distinguish between the sexes.[77] Zolov comments, "The jipis were a direct threat to a hegemonic value system grounded in patriarchy and

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[74] Zolov, 7.
[75] Zolov, 5. Emphasis in the original.
[76] Ibid, 115.
[77] Ibid, 106. Zolov includes some examples, such as an image printed in El Excelsior from 1966 that depicted a hippie couple dressed similarly, bearing the caption, "which is which?"

heroic nationalism," supporting his assertion with critiques like the following, published—incredibly—in late October, 1968:

> "It's preferable to see youth discontent in an open and virile manifestation, in a vigorous, bold protest, [which is] much more [Mexican], much more comprehensible than the absurd attitude of 'passivism,' which is only a pretext for vagrancy and corruption….Mexico needs men, not hippies."[78]

Zolov remarks that the conservative commentator, publishing his remarks just weeks after the massacre of students at Tlatelolco, had one thing at least in common with critics on the left, who also condemned "jipitecas" for being "passive," averse to engaging in direct political action.

If, as José Agustín recounts, the term "jipiteca" largely dropped out of use during the rise of "la onda," "jipi" has since made a comeback. It is now used by "la banda" as a pejorative label to designate an inauthentic figure, one who supposedly employs the trappings of alternative culture while seeking only pleasure and without extending solidarity to anyone else. Depending on the purported class background of the person in question, the "jipi" label may or may not overlap with another pejorative label—"fresa"—used to describe middle-class and upper-class youth whose class and mainstream cultural values place them beyond the bounds of "banda" solidarity. Kids identified as emo are often referred to as "fresas" in addition to the emo label.

Arguably, the term "fresa" includes something of the gendered significance of "emo" in the modern Mexican lexicon, in addition to being freighted with class valuations. Meaning literally "strawberry," the word "fresa" in its slang usage generally connotes a certain delicacy, a presumed lack of boldness and wit—an inability to understand popular reality or to navigate the rough city beyond the bounds of comfortable upper-class enclaves. Punks, on the other hand, while being represented as violent and clannish, are somewhat redeemed by their virile masculinity and their lower-

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[78] Ibid, 134.

class origins, figured in leftist accounts as more naturally resistant, in accordance with a tradition of Mexican revolutionary heroism. Here, the media, the academy, and "la banda" concur in the gendering of class, youth culture, and resistance to social and political norms.

3.4 The Righteous and the Profane

The fractiousness of Mexico City's punk scene, dependent on varying aesthetic and social practices to distinguish shifting sub-identities within one large and diverse group of people, contradicts structuralist representations of youth social networks, like that of Dick Hebdige in his landmark 1979 publication, Subculture: the meaning of style. Of course, Hebdige was writing in a very different geographical and temporal moment when he in fact declared that punk was dead. To shock had become chic, he sniffed, quoting a 1977 ad campaign for a high fashion line that had drawn on punk for inspiration, which "presaged the subculture's imminent demise."[79] Having theorized punk (and subculture generally) as a working-class phenomenon, a "semiotic guerrilla warfare" waged against the hegemony of the ruling classes through style, its apparent cooptation by elites for Hebdige spelled its demise.[80]

In fact, as punk became a global music, taking root from place to place, in locations where class functioned differently or where youth contended with different sets of social norms than in Britain, its continued viability challenged Hebdige's work on various points. "Youth culture" also garnered an extended scholarly discourse, in which Hebdige and his colleagues at the Birmingham School came under criticism for the ways in which their analyses were thought to privilege not only the working class, but also

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[79] Dick Hebdige, Subculture: the meaning of style (London: Methuen & Co, 1979), 96.
[80] Ibid, 105. Hebdige borrows this term from Umberto Eco.

white male subjects generally. Critics soon questioned the concept of subculture from a feminist perspective, and produced evidence that middle-class youth also formed sub-cultural groups.[81] Others have critiqued "subculture" based on subjects' ethnic identities, on the contrasting specificities of subcultures in locations beyond Britain, and on the impact of the Internet on youth culture.[82] Recent studies have also attempted to "queer" the concept of youth culture, while others have investigated whether "youth" itself is a relevant term in the study of such social groups, which increasingly appear to retain participants well into their middle age.[83] Still, the concept of subculture survives, having entered into a more colloquial vocabulary in addition to its continued scholarly use, despite alternate concepts such as the "urban tribe" or the more emplaced "music scenes," created during a "post-subcultural" turn in scholarship.[84]

I find that the concept of the music scene is a useful one because it focuses on place as an intersection of unifying practices rather than more rigid notions of social structure, identity, and belonging. As Bennett and Kahn-Harris note, "various contributors have used the term as a way of creating 'a framework that encompasses the material specificities of global place building and urban experience.'"[85] The idea of "scene" has also been adopted outside of popular music or youth culture scholarship, used to describe the union of other iconic practices within particular locations.[86] I invoke the "music scene" concept when referring specifically to encounters that occur among young people in Mexico City who self-identify as punk, or those that call attention to

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[81] For feminist criticism, see Angela McRobbie, Feminism and Youth Culture (New York: Routledge, 2000). McRobbie has been writing on the subject of female participation in youth cultures since the 1980s. For one of the first studies to question the working-class background of punk subcultures, see Dave Laing, One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1985).
[82] David Muggleton and Rupert Weinzierl, Post-subcultures Reader (New York: Berg, 2003).
[83] See Jodie Taylor, "Scenes and Sexualities: Queerly reframing the music scenes perspective" in Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies, vol. 26, no. 1, February 2012, 143-156. Also, Andy Bennett, "Punk's Not Dead: The continuing significance of punk rock for an older generation of fans" in Sociology, vol. 40, no. 2, 2006, 219-235.
[84] Taylor, 145. She laments the "lax vernacular" use of the term as well as its continued use in criticism.
[85] Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 14.
[86] Ibid.

traditional markers of "scene-ness," such as style. While certain aesthetic trends or musical and social performances may be similar to those in other geographical locations where punk flourishes, I argue, in accordance with many ethnomusicologist colleagues working on global popular music, that their meanings vary markedly because of differing historical contexts and contemporary social and political circumstances operative in their specific locations.

In addition to the ways in which the concept of a "scene" helps to ground the study of youth social networks in specific places, I also adopt the terminology of "la banda," not only because of its contemporary usage among friends in Mexico City—both within and outside of the punk scene—but also because of the ways in which the term highlights certain types of relationships that permeate and transcend specific "scenes" such as punk. Though Agustín maintained an interest in expanding the concept of "counterculture" from its 1960s connotations, his framing of "la banda" denotes a performed sense of solidarity rather than any particular social grouping, political orientation, or music scene. Allegedly formed from various "bandas," or gangs, the term refers to a strategic recognition of commonality between marginal youth, but may be extended to others who demonstrate solidarity, even if they come from more privileged backgrounds. To be "banda," then, signifies a subject's mastery of performances that demonstrate a broad class-conscious solidarity. Arguably, it would not be possible to be punk in Mexico City without first performing this broader allegiance. It is to these encounters within the punk "scene," enacted simultaneously in the broader context of "la banda" that I turn my attention. At times, I highlight the ways in which punk is understood as forming part of a broad coalition of economically disadvantaged youth through a further appellation that my collaborators employed—"la banda punk"—a term that distinguishes members of "la banda" who also participate in the punk scene or self-identify as "punk."

If I therefore follow many scholars before me in rejecting "subculture" terminology because of its often-rigid focus on social structure, still I value Hebdige for theorizing the importance of style. Looking beyond what seemed to be the fairly tight boundaries of the subcultures he posited, he also proposed that scholars track relationships between groups, expressed through the aesthetics of style. In the case of punk, for example, Hebdige called for a study of the links between punk and reggae, which he considered to be related "at a deep structural level."[87] While punks embraced the profane in order to express their symbolic resistance, Hebdige argued that they were fascinated by the seeming "righteousness" of reggae fans:

> But at almost every turn the dictates of this profane aesthetic [punk] were countermanded by the righteous imperatives of another musical form: reggae. Reggae occupies the other end of that wide spectrum of influences which bore upon punk. As early as May 1977 Jordan, the famous punk shop assistant of Sex and Seditionaries was expressing a preference for reggae over 'new wave' on the pages of the New Musical Express (7 May 1977). "It's the only music we [i.e. Jordan and J. Rotten] dance to"…Most conspicuously amongst punk groups, the Clash were heavily influenced not only by the music, but also by the visual iconography of black Jamaican street style.[88]

Hebdige claimed that through semiotic deconstruction of youth sub-cultural style, "we can watch, played out on the loaded surfaces of British working-class youth cultures, a phantom history of race relations since the War."[89] In particular, he emphasized punk as a style that attempts a "white translation of black 'ethnicity:'"[90]

> Punk's guttersnipe rhetoric, its obsession with class and relevance were expressly designed to undercut the intellectual posturing of the previous generation of rock musicians…. Reggae attracted those punks who wished to give tangible form to their alienation. It carried the necessary conviction, the political bite, so obviously missing in most contemporary white music…. Dread, in particular, was an enviable commodity. It was the means with which to menace, and the elaborate free-masonry through which it was sustained and communicated on the street – the colours, the locks, the patois – was awesome and forbidding, suggesting as it did an impregnable solidarity, an asceticism born of suffering.[91]

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[87] Hebdige, 29.
[88] Ibid, 28-29.
[89] Ibid, 45.
[90] Ibid, 64.
[91] Ibid, 63.

As punk survived into the 1980s, becoming hardcore punk, there was arguably a rapprochement between righteous and profane sensibilities within the world of punk itself. Without jettisoning a “profane” aesthetics—in fact, potentially heightening these musically through an increasing sonic “dirtiness” of distortion—punks who embraced a hardcore style also created lyrics that shifted attention to social problems. Punks also began to adopt practices that exemplified their politics. The consolidation of “la banda,” and punks’ organization into collectives occurred at roughly the same moment as the rise of hardcore punk in Mexico, for example. With the collectives came the production of fanzines and the appropriation of anarchist self-educational values like “autogestión” as well. Punk style changed to encompass an aesthetic that, like Hebdige’s reggae in 1970s Britain, suggested the righteousness of social awareness and involvement as well as the “guttersnipe rhetoric” of disaffection.

Though racism operates quite differently in post-colonial Mexico than in post-war Britain, in Mexico too race, social power, and economic opportunity are linked, along with gender, class, sexuality, and other markers of difference. Mexico’s indigenous people make up the poorest demographic in the nation, while positions of power and authority remain concentrated among lighter-skinned “mestizos.” As punk lived on into 1980s Mexico, it became a vehicle for expressing the “tangible alienation” that Hebdige claimed British punks in the 1970s struggled to create through simultaneously emulating and disavowing reggae. Performing encounters within and beyond “la banda,” which is itself a classed and gendered “habitus,” Mexico City’s punks today work to practice an “impregnable solidarity” of their own, one that is both righteous and profane.

Not accidentally, the encounters that I relate at the head of this chapter date from my earliest period of fieldwork, when it was indeed hard to see past self-consciously different appearances and apparently rude behavior, past jaded local

opinion from the press as well as from friends outside of my fieldwork circle. My "extranjera" understanding also needed to work past the kinds of sociological and cultural studies analyses of youth social networks that I had encountered in the past, and that are still perpetuated in modern-day academic and media accounts. In addition to finding my bearings regarding a model of the youth social networks that best accorded with my own experience in Mexico City's punk scene, I also wanted to take into account the not infrequent assertion by my interlocutors that punk is a social movement. In the final chapter, I will return to that notion to deepen my representation of the networks that participants in Mexico City's punk scene navigate, drawing on recent social movement theory that is indebted to authors like Arjun Appadurai, Bruno Latour, and Gilles Deleuze.

In the chapters that follow, I explore the ways in which Hebdige's notions of profanity and righteousness combine, just as aesthetics and politics combine, in the formation of a specifically Mexican "punk" solidarity. I also focus on the aesthetics of the various kinds of punk that exist in the scene—as well as other kinds of musical genres like underground, politically-engaged rapping over simple beats, dubbed "hip hop libertario"—and what such aesthetics may signify for a social network that defines itself through political as well as musical performance. Though ultimately, I do not concur with some of my acquaintances in the punk scene who refer to punk as a "movement," I am interested in the ways that the qualified openness of the scene and its place within the more expansive network of "la banda" gives scene participants a springboard to enact their ideals in ways that might surprise a more casual observer.

4. Encounters

A small man, he appeared even more compact in performance despite the loudness of his sound. Stooping forwards slightly, back and abdominal muscles taut with exertion, he took a broad stance, legs planted firmly apart in an attempt to force every last particle of air from his lungs. His shiny, sweaty face contracted around his widely opened mouth, he was almost motionless as he delivered his lines, his focus exclusively on forcing his airflow. Taking quick, deep breaths, his head tended merely to bob a bit between lines. When a real pause came in the text, he burst briefly into motion, springing upright, bouncing on the balls of his temporarily liberated feet. As he moved around the makeshift stage, he stirred the humid air of the performance space, seeming to infuse it with a new source of heat. Swiping quickly at his face with his soaked t-shirt and flashing a wet midriff, he suddenly tensed up again, clenching his fist around the microphone as he crouched into his next verse.

Punk vocalists are not infrequently hoarse after performance. One musician friend confided that his head and back also hurt after extended bouts of vocalization. After his performances, I could hear his discomfort, his voice reduced to a croaking whisper though his eyes sparkled with the excitement of performing. Out of curiosity, I acquired a teaching video by a singer who claimed to have created exercises for vocalists working in extreme styles, to help them avoid damage to their vocal folds as they perfected the "art of screaming."[1]

To my surprise, my punk vocalist friend expressed an interest in it. But over the course of the next several months, it became a running joke. Had he watched it? What

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[1] Bootsy Holler, dir. "The Art of Screaming: total training for vocalists on the edge" (Seattle: Art of Screaming, 2008) DVD, 90 minutes.

did he think? No, nothing, came the reply again and again. He insisted he hadn't even cracked it open, heaping scorn on the very notion that it might actually do him good. As far as I know, he still has my video.

The guitarist and vocalist of Venezuelan hardcore band Apatía-No had been begging for water, calling out to "anyone of conscience" to please get some to the stage at the earliest possible moment. She had been pleading for a good ten minutes at least, and her impatience was beginning to show. "Agua!" she intoned into her microphone, and her bandmate would do the rest, requesting again that someone please lend a hand before, unsuccessful, they would launch into the next breakneck song and repeat the cycle all over again. She continued to perform despite her thirst until a break in the performance several songs later allowed her to monopolize audience attention on the immediacy of her need.

"La banda" was in rare form. Great excitement translated into enhanced physical demonstrativeness, including a great deal of singing, shouting, dancing, some fighting, and one person lost consciousness and was quickly evacuated from the space. The performance finally had to be halted when an audience member climbed onto a structure abutting the stage and dove off, his body knocking into and over various people below. The lead vocalist urged the audience to please be careful, not to be violent amongst themselves. In a momentary spirit of unity, the crowd began to chant, "Muerte al estado, qué viva la anarquía!"[2] The drummer caught their spirit and rat-tatted in time with them on his snare before launching into the opening flourish of the song. And away they went.

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[2] "Death to the state! Long live anarchy!"

The party began to break up early on Sunday morning, just as the Metro re-opened for the day. Yawning, we groped for our things among a few bodies stretched out in dead sleep. He asked if I'd hold his leather jacket for a moment while he organized himself. "Of course," I said, sleepily extending a lazy arm, which immediately sank under the unexpected weight.

"How heavy it is!" I exclaimed in surprise. My friend gave me a weary and also conspiratorial glance. "Just like rebellion," he replied and rubbed his tired eyes.

Several of the people who frequent the punk scene are also fans of "hip hop libertario," an underground hip hop made with all of the contagious rhythm of mainstream hip hop, but with an attempt to limit the sonic hallmarks of its commercialism. Enjoying punk and hip hop both makes sense, as both rely heavily on language for their impact. But in hip hop the word gets a different sort of focus. There is less speed, less distortion, and so there is a better opportunity to play with it, shape it, modify it, give it double meanings.

A musician friend, who had been in a popular punk band that disbanded a few years back was experimenting with hip hop, and we talked of the cleverness with which rappers do things with words. He had a theory as to why hip hop might be particularly attractive to a Mexican audience—that such wordplay was similar to the Mexican practice of "albures," a form of speech almost exclusively practiced among men, entailing a great deal of double-talking and one-upmanship, a competition between men to see who can create the best sexual puns, generally putting one another down in the process. Careful to distance himself from the abusive aspects of "albures," my friend nevertheless linked them to the deeply playful, sharp, skillful manipulation of language involved in hip hop libertario.

Upon returning to the United States after my fieldwork, I wrote to a friend from the punk scene, a self-styled poet who I regretted not seeing before my departure. I noted that at least we had seen one another a couple of weeks before my leaving, when he had had a chance to give me his traditional idiosyncratic greeting, by sneaking up behind me and pinching my elbow. To my message, I received the following playful response, which turns on a pun for the word "elbow" ("codo") and the colloquial expression "to be stingy" ("ser codo") as well as a double entendre on "to pinch" ("pellizcar"):

> "amiga bueno espero toido [sic] vaya bien en tu regreso a casa. pellizcar el codo dice, no seas coda, creo. ya que me [sic?] con ganas de pellizcarte más. un abraxo [sic]…."
> "Very well friend, I hope that all goes well on your return home. To pinch the elbow means don't be stingy, I believe. Because I have the desire to pinch you more. An embrace…"

There seemed to be a general ban on directly assisting me with my research throughout my fieldwork period. This meant that I should not hope to be successful when asking direct questions, nor could I ask for interviews, and even recording performances was not something I could presume to have anyone's blessing to do. Still, it seemed to me that the people whose company I enjoyed the most, and the ones who appeared to enjoy my company as well, found indirect ways to assist me. I might be expressly invited to a specific event, with the understanding that it was something I should see. Or I might be invited to come to a set of meetings that a collective was holding. And, on three separate occasions, three men each spontaneously gifted me with a large bundle of fanzines from their own private collections, with the express wish that I might use them to inform myself about who punks were and what they believed.

We were having one of those difficult conversations walking single file along the crowded sidewalk.

"Why aren't there more women in the punk scene?" my punk woman friend asked me over her shoulder, as if I were more of an expert on the subject than she was.

"Uh, well, there's still a big imbalance of men and women in a lot of music scenes, not just punk. What do you think?" I asked.

She thought for a moment, and called back with the image of a vicious cycle. Women don't participate in the punk scene because they see that there aren't many women who participate in the punk scene.

Asked to help gather "coóperación," donations, at a night gig during the Femstival, a three-day festival organized by local punk women to celebrate International Women's Day, I found myself wheedling and cajoling the (mostly male) audience to give up even a peso in support of the event. One guy looked over my shoulder at the women setting up instruments on the makeshift stage, and in a whiny, disappointed tone, he asked if it would really be all "chicas" performing that night.

"Yes," I said, locking my eyes on his, daring him to contradict me. "Isn't that fantastic?"

A bit sheepishly, he agreed as he dropped a few centavos in my jar.

During a meeting of Las Cirujanas, the collective that was organizing the Femstival, the woman tasked with creating the image for our promotional materials presented her drawing. Riffing on an iconic image of the evolutionary process, proceeding from a drawing of a chimpanzee through various stages of human development up to a male "homo sapiens," she pictured a chimp and then a line of

women instead, engaged in pursuing a dark, skeletal figure, and launching projectiles such as an iron and a bathroom scale.

We oohed over the clever, intricate image, noticing its wonderful details—one woman on a bike, another with dark glasses and a cane, another with a guitar. The artist explained that she didn't want the dark, threatening figure to be too easily understood as a man, that she didn't want to create an image that would make men feel unwelcome at the event. She also pointed out a somewhat androgynous figure in the parade of women meant to be "trans."

Despite the rich detail of the image and the diversity it was meant to demonstrate, one of our party was not satisfied. The female figures, to her eyes, looked too "gringa."

There was a moment of silence and silent communication, embarrassed eyes darting and meeting around the crowded room. And then the exuberance burst forth again. "Lo que sea!" exclaimed one woman. Whatever!

Twice already, my friend had launched herself into me, slam style, laughing as I careened forward a few paces. Each time, I looked at her in puzzlement before turning back to the band. No one else was dancing, so what was she up to? She did it again, and again I fell forward. When I shot her a quizzical glance, she exclaimed, "You look as though you might break!" I tried to steel myself for her next attempt, thinking she wasn't much different in build or height than me. Surely I could stand my ground. I had taken self-defense classes, Tai Chi, yoga. Surely I knew how to ground my body firmly enough to avoid being mowed down by a woman of my own size.

At her next attempt, I staggered forward a bit less. But I staggered forward nonetheless.

One night I arrived at a party and found myself surrounded by new acquaintances, college-educated women trained mostly in fields related to my own. One by one, ethno-historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and economists introduced themselves to me, women who lamented ruefully that these days they spent their time in administrative roles, supporting the more stimulating pursuits of others. "And where do you study?" the anthropologist asked me, having determined that our interests were the closest, and having already revealed that she had studied at the prestigious Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH).

Without waiting for my response, she answered herself. "Harvard!" she exclaimed, and putting up two hands in front of her, she designated one to stand in for "my" illustrious educational institution, then designated the other as "INAH," measuring a foot between them and lowering the INAH hand beneath the Harvard hand. She shook her arms at me for emphasis before turning away and rejoining the conversation that had already moved on, giving me no time to protest her self-deprecation, nor thank her for the undoubtedly rich compliment she had paid me by elevating me to the Ivies. A note of something hard in her tone made me hold my tongue. She was not really joking, I felt, but making a point.

I stopped to say hello to a friend in the Chopo, wincing as I noticed the terrible purpling blisters on his face and neck. He stretched his hands out so I could see that they too were covered with the angry-looking reaction. He had a bit of work at a soap factory, which issued its workers heavy gear to protect them from the noxious chemicals they were exposed to daily. But the temperature on the factory floor was unbearably high. Workers routinely decided chemical burns were better than the heat exhaustion they suffered, compounded by the protective clothing. They knew that this decision was taken at their own risk.

His story was not unusual. Another friend had recounted that he handled sharp edges all day, and chose not to use the protective gloves the factory provided. Virtually no one did. Paid by the amount of work they could complete in a certain time, no one wanted to be slowed down.

Another factory-employed friend was fortunate to work in conditions that did not jeopardize his health or safety despite being terribly boring and insecure. He was laid off at least three times in the two years in which I came to know him.

There was a tall, bearded, and blue-eyed stranger lounging in the doorway to the apartment building. He was looking for shelter our mutual friend, who maintained an open-door policy for punk scene connections traveling through Mexico City from various parts of the world. On any given week, she might have one or a handful of visitors from the United States, Europe, and far less frequently, from other parts of Latin America, people more or less known to her or to her friends. She met some of these friends during trips to the United States, where she had family settled and where she worked stints at agricultural jobs. The work got her outdoors a bit, and she reported that it was a nice change from the series of short-term contract desk jobs she took in D.F.

She already had other guests, but took in the extra without a qualm. Our evening was filled with romantic North American tales of living rough and riding the rails.

Taking some leisure one Sunday afternoon, I was ambling through the center of Coyoacán, a middle-class part of Mexico City teeming with restaurants, cafes, and parks dotted with strolling families and street performers. I watched children run by with balloons tied to their wrists, musing about which movie I might see if I stopped by the Cineteca, an arthouse cinema nearby. All of a sudden, I spotted an acquaintance from the punk scene. "What are you up to?" he asked as we greeted one another. "Just

walking about," I replied, ignoring the stares of wrought-iron bench dwellers as I shook the grimy hand he extended. "And you?" He gestured to a plastic bag hung around his wrist, filled with discarded beverage cans that he'd been collecting. Simply recycling them for a small profit is not an option, but many people reuse the thin, brightly colored metal to make little figurines that they sell as handicrafts on the street or to other "banda" at events.

Knowing that several of the city's "tianguis" were controlled by membership organizations that interfaced politically with local officials, I once questioned a friend whether there was any organization in the small market he frequented, if he was permitted by a "tianguis" organization to sell among its members. He answered with a joke that his right to sell where he did was secured by "el S/señor," which could either mean some unidentified man or God depending on his intent. The fact that he pointed his finger skyward as he repeated the joke did not assure me that his response was anything more than a way of dodging the question.

Having learned that a friend from the Chopo had studied sociology, I asked him what had motivated him to go to university? Among "la banda," some people insist that a university education spoils the class-conscious intellect, its revolutionary potential. The hint of a smile infused his perennially thoughtful features, his rather sad eyes. "Por gusto," he responded, and explained that it was during the university strike of 1999-2000 that he had first been bitten by the desire to study there.[3]

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[3] "Por gusto"—for the pleasure of it. The 1999-2000 strike on the campus of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México began with the announcement, in January 1999, that the university would begin charging tuition, at the rate of about $150 (USD). The Mexican constitution states that all state-funded education is free, though politicians have long debated whether this should apply to the autonomous university, whose quality of education arguably has declined in recent decades, due to ballooning costs and lack of sufficient funding. By raising tuition, students argued that the university would force many to

He had done all the classes, persisting despite the difficulties students at UNAM often cite as unforeseen costs of education—transportation, library fees, and other incidentals. A trickier problem was dealing with his professors' discomfort with his proposed thesis topic, anarchist influences within the FAT (Frente Auténtico del Trabajo), one of Mexico's most powerful trades union organizations. He said that many of his professors were old-school Marxists, unprepared to take on this challenge to their point of view. Finally, he had had to work while preparing the thesis, a delicate juggling act that he had not been able to sustain. He hoped to finish someday, not because he had any ambition to become a sociologist, but because he had put so much work into it. And then, his office job was kind of boring, he said. You need to do things to activate your mind a bit. He gave me that sad-eyed smile again.

"What about your books?" I wanted to know. Occasionally he sold books at the Chopo. "Is selling books a bit like that too?" I asked. Yes, he agreed, but after thinking a moment, he added, "That's to spread the word."

It was another one of those phone calls, out of the blue, telling me to come out to meet him while he accomplished some errand or other. He sold books and videos in the street, mostly at the mouth of a busy Metro station, though also at the Chopo market. I tagged along once as he sourced his books, and now tonight I wasn't sure what we were going to do as I set out on the rainy summer evening. I found him at his "puesto," the makeshift booth he had set up on the sidewalk, one of a long row of metal rods and thin

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terminate their studies entirely. After almost a year of unsuccessful negotiations between the striking body and the university, the strike ended through force on February 7, 2000 when federal police stormed the campus.

wooden slabs, protected by colorful plastic tarps and snaked through with electrical wires.

It was not unusual for this friend to press me to borrow out-there pornographic videos, enjoying my marked lack of appreciation for such offers. Specializing in that little niche had its benefits, he informed me. He had developed a clientele. He familiarized himself with his regular customers' preferences, and they would repeatedly come back for his personalized attention. There wasn't much traffic on this rainy evening, however, and the vendors began to thin out. He piled his books and the elements of the booth into a shopping cart, and we walked slowly through the drizzle as he leaned his back into pushing the heavy, creaking cart through a long, unwieldy maze of streets, sidewalks, and empty lots.

5. Labor

The study of youth social networks has typically privileged the space of leisure as its site of investigation. From the Chicago School's sociological research on youth delinquency in the 1920s, through the Birmingham School's theorization of "subculture" in the 1970s, to the recent ascendancy of the term "scene," exploration of youth culture has largely focused on the relationships between young people's social networks and their cultures-at-large through a focus on how youth spend their free time (and money).

Emphasizing non-work time frequently serves to demonstrate the ways in which individuals in many youth networks display a lack of interest in a normative work ethic, constructing their most meaningful identities and experiences outside the culturally valorized realm of work or study. Writing about the history of work refusal in North America, Kathi Weeks recognizes this tendency, situating "youth subcultures from beatniks, hippies, punks, and slackers" in a trajectory of "those who failed to internalize the gospel of work—a history of 'bad subjects' who resist and may even escape interpellation."[1]

Writing about punk in the North American context, however, Alan O'Connor gives a somewhat different picture of punk resistance to a specifically middle-class work ethic and identity, claiming that punks in the United States are mostly "dropouts from the middle-class."[2] He employs this term to reflect not just the agency of punks' lifestyle choices, but also an often-voiced sense of marginalization from a dominant middle-class culture.

> If we take seriously Bourdieu's analysis of the symbolic violence of the dominant culture and the educational system, we might say that these are people who have been dropped. Dropped from the team. In many interviews they describe being

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[1] Kathi Weeks, The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 79-80.
[2] Alan O'Connor, Punk Record Labels and the Struggle for Autonomy: The Emergence of D.I.Y. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), ix.

> awkward and weird kids. Smart kids who had a hard time in school. Kids who went to college often because that was what was expected of them…Weird kids with huge amounts of energy and creativity were drawn to punk rock.[3]

Characterizing the North American punk scene as comprised of "middle-class dropouts" with some working-class kids mixed in, O'Connor sees higher education and the survival of a strong work ethic as reasons for the success of many independent punk record labels, which he theorizes as a major component of the emergence of Do-It-Yourself punk culture in the 1980s.[4] Instead of a resistance to work, O'Connor suggests that North American punks have indeed internalized a work ethic, but reject the ordinary channels through which they might be expected to apply it.

Turning to Mexico City's modern-day punk scene, how may we understand the role of a work ethic in the sustenance of its DIY culture, in a context where the balance of class swings much more heavily towards a largely informally employed or underemployed class of participants, in a post-colonial nation now absorbed by the neo-liberal global market? In the perennially depressed Mexican economy, which has weathered a series of crises over several decades, how do punks in Mexico City deal with the decline of traditional working class jobs and an attendant devaluation of labor?

Born in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, young people in Mexico have grown up in an environment where economic crisis indeed followed economic crisis, real wages were drastically reduced over time as the cost of essential goods rose, and most saw a decline in their standards of living while a few became immensely wealthy. After a brief period of economic expansion in the 1940s, when a small Mexican middle class emerged, the country suffered various setbacks in ensuing years, and was particularly hard-hit by the global recession of the 1970s, turning to global financial institutions like the World

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[3] Ibid, 58.
[4] Ibid, 59.

Bank for help. Over the 1980s, the income of those in traditional working class jobs fell five percent each year, the real take-home pay of the average worker falling forty to fifty percent while inflation steadily rose. In Mexico City, the government slashed spending on services for the already over-stretched metropolis, skimping on transportation, water, health, and sanitation services. Labor disputes were fiercely put down.

In 1988, the Salinas administration accelerated the process of neo-liberalization. During Salinas's term, state employment was halved, the banks were privatized, and the government sought to revoke indigenous rights to collectively owned "ejido" territory. Meanwhile, the lowering of import barriers on key products like corn caused their severe devaluation. More and more peasant agricultural communities were forced off of their land into unemployment in the cities. The so-called Tequila Crisis of 1995 caused the devaluation of the peso and another foreign bailout. For the cost of 47.5 billion dollars, the United States government temporarily assured its business owners a source of cheap labor in Mexico and the "maquila" economy thrived until 2000, when many jobs were outsourced to China. Over the course of these decades, wealth disparity increased. Despite its many economic woes, Mexico ranked ninth among the countries of the world for its number of billionaires, including Carlos Slim, the telecommunications magnate who has been recognized as the world's richest man since 2010.[5]

In addition to the loss of labor through high levels of immigration, massive over-crowding in the cities, increasing levels of poverty, and cuts to key services, the Mexican economy has seen the exponential growth of the black market economy, including the rise of informal labor. Writing about the Mexican informal economy of the 1980s and 1990s, John C. Cross argued that despite the fact that Mexico City's government

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[5] These data can be found in several sources, but here I draw most heavily on the cogent account of David Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 98-104. For details on the impact of economic policy on Mexico City specifically, I also rely on Jorge Gamboa de Buen, Ciudad de México: Una Visión de La Modernización de México (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994).

officially condemned the practice of informal street vending as being beyond the reach of state regulation as well as seeing it as incompatible with the modern, cosmopolitan image of the capital they tried to project, the state nevertheless tacitly approved the development of informal labor.

Through his ethnography among street vendors in Mexico City, Cross found evidence that Mexican workers expressed satisfaction in their independence from formal labor, despite potential economic hardship and vulnerability to attacks by police. Cross's focus was on political organizations of street vendors, however, groups who worked in various well-established "tianguis." These actors, who establish membership and leadership amongst themselves, have various means of negotiating with the state.[6]

The majority of my contacts participated in street vending in an even more informal manner than that Cross describes, however, as ambulatory vendors or those who set up booths or lay their merchandise down along busy streets or near Metro stations. Their participation in the Tianguis Cultural del Chopo nevertheless exemplifies the kinds of struggles common among those who seek to join organized "tianguis" in the city, where the right to sell merchandise at particular locations is conveyed by the local market leaders in exchange for political support. At the Chopo market, vendors pay for their right to set up booths, are designated specific locations in which to do so, and must contribute to the security and sanitation brigades organized by market authorities.[7]

There are long waiting lists of would-be entrepreneurs hoping for the privilege—and the profit—of becoming legitimate Chopo vendors. Despite tacitly allowing punks to squat their space at the back of the market, largely in order to avoid their continued

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[6] Returning to the subject over a decade later in a study of media piracy, Cross again focuses on the political organization of street vendors, locating his study in the barrio of Tepito, which forms one of the largest open-air market centers in the city, known for selling counterfeit goods of all sorts, as well as being feared by many chilangos as a center of violence and criminal activity. See John C. Cross, "Mexico" in Media Piracy in Emerging Economies (New York: Social Sciences Research Council, 2011), accessed online at http://piracy.ssrc.org/the-report/, 7 January, 2013.

[7] For more information on the Chopo market, see Abraham Ríos Manzano, Tianguis Cultural del Chopo: Una Larga Jornada (Ciudad de México: Programa de Apoyo a las Culturas Municipales y Comunitarias, 1999).

complaint and aggression, the market authorities regularly persecute ambulatory vendors, dozens of whom circulate with small quantities of merchandise, largely food, cigarettes, and other small items, each week.[8] Police are more likely to harass ambulatory vendors throughout the city, and may come to the assistance of Chopo authorities if called to help sweep them from the market.

In addition to the precariousness of self-employment, a few of my acquaintances in the punk scene experienced difficulties sustaining jobs in more traditional working-class occupations like manufacturing. Frequent lay-offs, in addition to on-site dangers, made such work undesirable. Some of the more fortunate ones migrated back and forth to the United States to supplement their incomes. Education was always a contentious topic of discussion among "la banda." Most of my acquaintances who had had the opportunity to attend university had not been able to finish. In addition to the difficulty of passing the entrance exams for the autonomous university, where higher education is subsidized, there are still many economic challenges for those who matriculate. Among those I knew with some university education or even college degrees, most were underemployed, working in temporary or part-time administrative jobs. Some had full-time work, but in jobs far less satisfying than those they dreamed of when they began their studies. The strikingly positive sense of agency that Cross and others have posited among laborers who supposedly choose the informal sector was not often on display among my own interlocutors.

What was striking was a tendency within the punk scene to act upon ideals of everyday mutual aid in the context of an informal exchange that structures the scene itself. Though ostensibly, selling goods at the Chopo market is at least in part imagined

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[8] My interlocutors generally guessed that people with formal puestos in the Chopo market might make 1,000 to 3,000 pesos on a good day of trade, while an ambulatory vendor might hope to make something in the range of 30 to 50. Given punks' bitterness to tianguis policies, these figures may be exaggerated.

as outreach to a larger audience, many of the people who buy things there are themselves part of the punk scene. Several people also work or supplement their incomes by providing services to their friends. In addition to trading goods and services, sharing items like food, Metro tickets, and other necessities is a point of pride. At the entrance to a punk show, fans routinely ask permission to "hacer la vaca," an expression that signifies pooling money among friends. The informal economy that pervades Mexico City's punk scene thus includes a gift economy based on the bartering and swapping of goods conducted through its friendship networks. All of these practices help the people who frequent the punk scene get by in Mexico City's tough economy.

In this chapter, I analyze some of the performances through which participants in Mexico City's punk scene attempt to re-imagine their relationships to labor, which includes maintaining the informal networks of exchange that permeate the punk scene itself. The discourse of solidarity that punk scene participants sustain therefore takes on economic as well as social and political significance as punks hope to accomplish meaningful work while also getting by through the limited channels of marginalized labor in the neo-liberal metropolis.

5.1 The Hard Work of Screaming

One way in which Mexico City's punks enact a revaluation of labor is through the reconfiguration of the purpose and dignity of physical labor through the exertion of musical—and especially vocal—performance. In addition to bodily signifiers of hard physical work such as sweat and muscle tension, the punk vocalist's sound also provides evidence of intense effort. This effect is achieved through the vocal timbres punk musicians prefer, most often choosing between shout or growl, though a few punk

vocalists continue to favor the pressed, "belted" timbres of hard rock.[9] While in certain styles of singing, from opera to jazz, vocalists prize a "pure" tone, the result of a smooth, periodic vibration emanating through their vocal folds, in hard rock, punk, and extreme metal, vocalists prefer a distorted sound, though there is a difference in the degree of distortion obtained through various techniques. Rock vocalists tend not to sustain distorted timbres for long periods of time, for example, using them instead as ornaments or for heightened musical passages.[10] Hardcore punk and metal vocalists, however, often strive to produce an exclusively distorted sound, sustaining screaming or growling timbres throughout the duration of their performances.

The suggestion of hard physical work created by these vocalists is no accident, but a reflection of the enormous pressure they employ in order to turn their voices into distortion machines. Generally speaking, distorted vocal timbres are produced by compressions along the vocal tract that are not found in a periodic vocal production that produces purer tones. Compression at various points along the vocal tract ensures not only the jagged, non-periodic wave forms associated with "noisy" sound production, but also that the different parts of the vocalist's compressed anatomy contribute their own vibrations, layering the randomly spiking wave forms and increasing the distorted nature of the sound that is produced.[11] The "death growl" produced by extreme metal vocalists, for example, arises when vocalists tighten the vocal tract and lower the larynx, forcing bursts of air through their vocal folds. This

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[9] The vocalist of Tijuana's Solución Mortal, for example, employs a more "rock" vocal sound, as does Mexico City's la Zappa Punk. Though still performing, these are musicians who largely crafted their sound when they started out performing in the scene in the 1980s. For more on rock and early punk in Mexico, see Maritza Urteaga Castro-Pozo, Por Los Territorios del Rock: Identidades Juveniles y Rock Mexicano (Ciudad de México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes/Culturas Populares, 1998).

[10] Johan Sundberg and D. Zangger Borch, "Some Phonatory and Resonatory Characteristics in the Rock, Pop, Soul, and Swedish Dance Band Styles of Singing" in Journal of Voice, vol. 25, no. 5 (2011), 532-537.

[11] Leda Scearce, interview by author, Durham, NC, 15 June 2012. Indeed, Scearce indicated that the production of distorted timbres makes it difficult to study the production of these sounds in the way voice experts study other types of vocal styles. The throat may be so constricted as to make the introduction of observational instruments impossible.

causes a dark, low-pitched rumbling sound often referred to in the punk scene as the "Cookie Monster voice," for its resemblance to the growled timbre produced by Sesame Street puppeteer, Frank Oz. A screaming timbre may be produced when vocalists tighten and lift their larynxes while engaging their ventricular folds, the tissue that surrounds the "true" vocal folds. The ventricular or "false" vocal cords are comprised of a denser, more muscular tissue, unlike the smooth, gelatinous "true" vocal folds, which move in a rippling, wavelike motion. The rougher vibration of the coarse tissue of the ventricular folds, with the brief engagement of the true vocal folds, creates distortion as well as the ability to achieve some pitched sound. A third technique also involves a high larynx and compressed vocal tract, with sub-glottal pressure used to make walls of the vocal tract, controlling airflow through its hardened surfaces. With this technique, vocalists can move more easily in and out of song. Most punk vocalists use some combination of these three difficult techniques.[12]

In addition to the tense muscles vocalists employ to create such distortions, the force of the vibrations as the vocal folds repeatedly open and close in the moment of sound production is often much greater than that caused by gentler forms of vocalization. Similar to the ways in which skin will blister and swell more easily with repeated, more forceful contact, the vocal folds are more susceptible to injury when vocalists use such force, which causes the vocal folds to crash together in a potentially harmful way. Though voice experts claim that it is possible to learn to produce extreme vocal timbres in ways that, used judiciously, will not necessarily damage the voice, symptoms such as hoarseness, breathiness, sore throat, and loss of voice may well

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[12] Melissa Cross, telephone interview by author, 24 June 2012. Cross is the creator of the Zen of Screaming teaching video series. She has studied extreme vocal performance as a vocalist as well as a teacher.

plague those who try to produce such sounds at length and with frequency, particularly those who have no vocal training.[13]

Punk and metal vocalists may also suffer from headaches and back pain due to another aspect of untrained, extreme vocalization—the misuse of the breath. Hardcore vocalists tend to impound air in their chests, closing the glottis to provide a fixed structure to push against. This "valsalva maneuver" is what the body does to assist in achieving difficult physical tasks such as heavy lifting or the labor of childbirth. Instead of permitting the air in the lungs to escape continuously, the body momentarily stops its airflow, allowing for the bearing down of other muscle groups. Vocalists who perform the valsalva maneuver continuously expend an enormous amount of energy and muscle tension in order to do so, rather than using the breath to support difficult vocalizations.

An additional obstacle to easy vocal production, punk lyrics are seldom catchy, seldom created through flowing meter and rhyme. Rather, the lyric content is often built from everyday prose on political and social themes, language that is all angles on the fast-working tongue. The vocalist must struggle to pronounce long, difficult phrases without falling behind the relentless pace set by the instrumentalists. Punk vocalists may sound harassed, even despairing, anguished and rushed as they work to articulate their cumbersome lines. The tension that they create, from the muscles surrounding the lungs through the vocal folds, may thus be found in the mouth as well, in the comparatively hard working of the tongue, palate, lips, and jaw.

Despite the potential usefulness of vocal training, many punks who might have access to it reject its value, due to the importance given to a sense of emotional

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[13] Melissa Cross tries to teach vocalists to control their voices to produce distorted vocal timbres rather than rely on the sensations of intense emotion to achieve the same effect. When angry, people often hold their breath and use their voices in sharp bursts of emphasis. Such vocal production is indeed expressive of bodily tension, but it may be reproduced through means involving less tension and potential for damage. The damage that untrained vocalists may do to their voices may sometimes help vocalists maintain their preferred sound, but all too often, it causes unreliable sound, which ultimately results in cancelled performances as well as disruption to their speaking voices.

immediacy that punk vocalists try to convey. Because the timbres they prefer carefully mimic the spontaneous expression of anger—particularly the scream—musicians and fans often believe that such vocalizations are simply natural, accessible to virtually anybody. The supposed naturalism of these vocal techniques is also appealing in a scene that prizes a DIY ethic and largely rejects the idea of technical prowess and formal study. Richard Middleton traces the development of rock vocal performance from its roots in the blues tradition, concluding that tightening the throat to convey emotion has developed for a long period of time among various types of musicians who hope to achieve an immediacy of vocal expression:

> …there is a strand where emotional tension tightens the throat: Robert Johnson is the central figure, and the influence of his celebrated 1930s recordings permeates the post-War Chicago blues of Wolf, Muddy Waters, Elmore James and others. This strand can then be identified as the single most important source for the "standard rock voice"—the straining, strutting macho lead—of the 1960s and 1970s….[14]

Turning to the early punk rock of the late 1970s, Middleton regards the technique of vocalists like Johnny Rotten as an attempt to explode the myth of vocal "soul-baring" that iconic hard rock vocalists of the 1970s aspired to create through a tight-throated vocal tradition. He calls attention to Rotten's speech-like singing, noting an apparent refusal of recent rock vocal technique through a more declamatory approach. He also claims that Rotten stylized his declamation through a non-normative pronunciation, creating a highly mannered diction that worked to prevent listeners from apprehending his vocal performance as a naturalistic expression of feeling.[15] Middleton likens this and other effects of Rotten's vocalization to Brechtian alienation effects, jarring listeners out

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[14] Richard Middleton, "Rock Singing" in A Cambridge Companion to Singing, ed. John Potter. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 31. Middleton notes that Johnson was "an iconic figure" for vocalists such as Mick Jagger, Robert Plant, and many heavy metal vocalists.
[15] Ibid, 32.

of the tendency to fall for the "trick" of common rock singing styles that convince them of the seamlessness of the singer's voice and emotional experience.[16]

With the spread of hardcore punk, however, punk musicians talked of expressing their own sense of alienation through a seemingly unmediated vocalization of rage. Here, Ian MacKaye (Minor Threat) and Keith Morris (Black Flag, Circle Jerks) reminisce about the birth of the hardcore scene in the early 1980s in the documentary American Hardcore:

> We'll just say *exactly* what's on our minds and do it in thirty-two seconds.
>
> We'd been made all these promises. You go to school, you do your homework, you go to college, you get a great job, you make lots of money, you get married, you have a couple of kids, dog, cat, goldfish, two-car garage, and that's not the way it is… I'm working Monday through Friday, here comes Friday night and I'm just going to go off. [makes sound and gestures to suggest a huge explosion].[17]

And finally, Chris Doherty of Boston's Gang Green, reflecting on his experience in a very hoarse, broken voice says, "We don't sing, we weren't singing, we were just screaming, against authority, our parents, about everything that was pissing us off in our lives."[18]

For such intense vocalization, hardcore punk vocalists, along with the practitioners of various heavy metal genres, turned again to an aesthetic similar to that used in 1960s and 70s rock performance. While retaining an overall tendency toward melodic vocalization, hard rock vocalists had employed some scream-like sounds to embellish lyrics, and regularly employed the tense, throaty timbres that Middleton describes as "lived in."[19] Suggesting through an apparently hard-used voice the toll that a hard-living rock and roll lifestyle might have on the body, the tight-throated, blues-derived rock vocalization conflates the singer's bodily experience and persona.

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[16] Ibid, 35.
[17] American Hardcore: The History of American Punk Rock 1980-1986, dir. Paul Rachman, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (2006), DVD, 140 minutes.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Middleton, 35.

Hardcore punk vocalists are also interested in representing hard living through intense vocal timbres, but beyond suggesting the hedonism of a hard rock lifestyle, they also search for a way to suggest their political commitment through a suitably expressive sound. While the shouted vocal timbres that many punks adopt might recall the "straining, strutting macho lead" voice of hard rock, punk vocalists choose timbres that may require even more effort to sustain, presenting the threat of serious damage to the voice.[20] Achieving a balance between vocal and instrumental sound is also a constant challenge for punk vocalists. Audiences value high volume and the impact of sound on the body as well as the ears. Waves of sound from high-energy drumming and overdriven guitars beat against the solar plexus. While the voice may be placed towards the front of the mix in the context of a recording, in performance the voice is less differentiated, often seemingly threatened by the band's power.

As vocalists strive to attain a difficult sonic balance, often with make-do audio equipment in small, over-packed, acoustically challenging spaces, microphones frequently falter. Vocalists, wanting to create their own overdrive, place them right up against their open mouths, where they frequently become waterlogged with saliva and sweat and may malfunction. Being at the edge of what they may make their voices do, as well as at the borders of the possible in terms of amplification, punk vocalists present working, straining, struggling bodies, bodies fighting against their physical limitations and the great volume of sound surging around them.

Emphasizing their exertion through such an embattled stance, punk vocalists conjure an important performative aspect of hard rock musicianship in a profoundly reconfigured way. While in 1960s and 70s rock music, figures from Jimi Hendrix to

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[20] Ibid, 31.

Jimmy Page embodied a new musical role, the "guitar hero," [21] the hard work of punk vocalization remakes the heroism of intense musical performance through a punk ethic. Related to 19th-century notions of the Romantic hero, the guitar hero stood out from his band as an individual, his musical adventures forming the quest that ultimately lent him seemingly supernatural powers.[22] Rock guitar heroes derive their aura of power through their virtuosity, through their capacity to explore unforeseen sonic properties of genre and instrumentation. Their astonishing technical accomplishment thus carries a whiff of transgression. Such artists came to seem inseparable from their virtuosity, which fixed their difference from other musicians. Because of the prominence of technically gifted guitarists both preceding and following from the rise of the rock guitarist in the 1960s, the presence of such figures in turn fixed the guitar hero as one of the key personas in 20th-century popular music.

As hardcore punk emerged in the early 1980s, however, bringing a new emphasis on the centrality of punk lyrics and the expression of anger, musical heroism was reframed. Based not on awesome technical achievement, but rather on the raw, physical effort involved in delivering the message of punk songs, hardcore punk heroism is not to be located in the figure of the virtuoso guitarist, but instead in the hard-working hardcore vocalist, whose voice performs a physically difficult, even punishing form of exertion.[23]

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[21] Steve Waksman, Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 237-248.

[22] Waksman, Instruments of Desire, 242. Regarding the connection to Romanticism, Waksman notes the ways in which Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page was compared to Niccolò Paganini, the 19th-century virtuoso violinist whose musical and rumored sexual prowess had some contemporaries guessing that he had conspired with the devil to obtain them. The comparison was furthered by the fact that Page's virtuosity involved unorthodox methods of drawing sound from the electric guitar, such as the use of a violin bow.

[23] In later sections, I will link the guitar hero with an everyday punk heroism, based in part on tropes of the revolutionary hero promoted through various forms of Mexican cultural and political expression. For reference, see for example Federico Navarette y Guilhem Olivier, Heroe: Entre el Mito y la Historia (México, D.F.: Universidad Autónoma de México, 2000).

The difficulty of extreme vocal production may be heard, for example, in the work of Antimaster, a band popular in Mexico City for its fusion of punk and metal styles, as well as its charismatic performance. In the song "Al Borde del Abismo la Esperanza Es Buena Espada" ("At the Edge of the Abyss Hope Is a Good Sword"), from their most recent self-titled studio album (2011), the text may refer to a bit of writing by Ricardo Flores Magón, a Mexican anarchist from the revolutionary period much admired among young radicals.[24] Giving the song an eerie, predictive feel, the lyrics foresee the end of hope if social change doesn't come soon. Several important lines are set in the future tense, the voice performing a seer-like role:

> asquerosamente miramos noticias de destrucción en el mundo
> demuestra lo podrido que está por dentro
> demuestra lo podrido que está por dentro
> muestras de unión hacen creer que quiza algun día
> acabaremos con lo que apoyan las muertes
> se acabarán? se acabarán? se acabarán las matanzas?
> hay mucho que hacer, lo que hagamos facilitará un cambio a mejor,
> si no trabajamos en estos momentos se apagará la esperanza
> se apagará, se apagará la esperanza
> se apagará, se apagará la esperanza[25]

Alternating between a false chord vocal production and a death growl, there is very little variety possible in terms of phrasing or pitch, and clearly articulating text is also a difficult business. Arguably, the qualities that limit the range of vocal expression are exactly those that give these vocal sounds their infamously demonic, sub-human quality. In this song, Antimaster's vocalist employs two distinct registers, one being significantly lower than the other, and he uses them to great effect, voicing more dire or ominous text through the deeper, more rumbling phonation. His phonation and articulation are quite slow and deliberate, breaking the fairly long lines of the song texts

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[24] Ricardo Flores Magón, "At the Edge of the Abyss," trans. Chaz Bufe in Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader, ed. Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005), 172-173.
[25] "With disgust we see the news of the destruction of our world/ it shows its inner putrefaction/ demonstrations of unity make one believe that maybe one day/ we will finish with all that supports the killings/ will they end? will the killings end?/ there is much to do, what we do will hopefully facilitate a change/ if we don't work in this moment, hope will die."

into short sub-phrases that rarely surpass five or six syllables.[26] Open vowel sounds that terminate words like "dentro" or "esperanza" provide him with the opportunity to elongate his syllables, the words trailing off into pure growl. At the very end of the recorded version of the song, the vocalist produces a sound somewhere between a gag and a growl, a vocable that emphasizes the monstrous quality of the voice.

Due to the vocalist's fairly static pitch and vocal quality, the other instrumentalists play in a slightly more intricate manner than do musicians who adhere to a hardcore punk style. The lead guitar has a more melodic role, repeating a series of figures that weave around the voice. The drums are also prominent, not only setting the pace through a heavy, rounded execution of the typical "d-beat" drum pattern, but also shepherding the band through some brief tempo changes.[27] Despite the more elaborate roles that the instrumentalists play in this kind of punk-metal crossover, however, the voice is still the most prominent feature in the band's overall sound. Accordingly, the vocalist also plays the most prominent role in performance, forming the visual center of the band as he works to deliver the song's troubling message through the dark, rattling tones of his extremely distorted vocal production.

5.2 The Affective Labor of Hardcore Punk

In addition to celebrating the laboring body, the hard-working punk voice suggests that delivering lyrics on political themes is a task whose difficulty lies in the affective labor as well as the physical work of communicating such messages. Musicians and fans alike talk about punk shows as a means to "sacar la rabia," to let out their

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[26] For example, he breaks the first two lines in the following manner: "Asquerosamente / miramos noticias / de destrucción en el mundo / Demuestra / lo podrido que está / por dentro". On the second repetition of the second line, he drops his voice to its lower pitch. Cross explains that it takes enormous support to do a death growl, and so singers generally cannot sustain such vocalization for long phrases.
[27] The d-beat is named for the British hardcore band, Discharge, who supposedly developed the signature drum pattern. The band also was known for experimenting with punk-metal crossover, and influenced many subsequent bands, particularly in the crust punk subgenre.

rage. The lyrics to punk songs, which often refer to historical events or political issues, are quite important as a part of this process. Mexico City's punks overwhelmingly prefer Spanish-language bands, underscoring the importance of lyric comprehension, and so maintain friendships with groups like Apatía-No, a popular Venezuelan hardcore band, as well as with bands from several other Latin American countries and Spain.[28] Apatía-No explicitly draws attention to the importance of their song lyrics, claiming that they are more important than their sound. To buttress this claim, they inform fans that their history stretches back even farther than their actual founding as a band, which occurred in 1996. As early as 1994, the core members of the original band were involved in a fanzine project also titled Apatía-No. The band stresses that the diffusion of ideas and not good musicianship is their primary aim, and so they see the original written manifestation of Apatía-No as of a piece with its later manifestation as a hardcore punk band.[29]

And yet, due to the extreme vocal timbres, fast tempos, heavy instrumental distortion, challenging acoustic environments, and technological difficulties that musicians and audiences experience in live performance, lyric content is not often wholly intelligible at punk shows. Musicians and fans alike joke about the incomprehensibility of punk song lyrics in a live setting. In the economy of live punk shows, the most valuable aspect of the performance is in fact the affective labor communicated through the toil of hard-working punk vocalists rather than their clear diction.[30]

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[28] Alan O'Connor also notes the Spanish-language preference among Mexico City's punk scene in "Local Scenes, Dangerous Crossroads" in Popular Music, vol. 21, no. 2 (May, 2002), 231.
[29] http://www.apatiano.webcindario.com/, accessed 29 November, 2010. The band expresses here the idea that through the medium of music, such ideas may be expressed more "directly."
[30] Many fans engage in inter-textual practices, learning lyrics printed on record jackets and in fanzines. But even taking the extreme distortion of punk into account, the importance of the lyrics in performance may not be all that different for punk fans than for rock music fans. Middleton writes, "Indeed, there is research to suggest that some listeners to rock pay little attention to verbal meaning. A more typical situation, perhaps, is where a vocal 'hook' works by bundling together the meaning, resonances and sound-shapes of the words together with the melodic, rhythmic, timbral and articulatory dimensions of their sung performance, encapsulating that particular semantic-affective field which will come to be associated with the song" (29).

In their recent contribution to affect theory, Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth define affects as "force, or forces of encounter."[31] Animating the relations between bodies, affects act like forces, impacting bodies and their environments even when they are subtle or gentle in quality. Just as they exist between people, between people and things—and in fact are characterized by their very intermediateness—affects also originate somewhere between conscious and non-conscious thought, as the authors explain:

> Sigmund Freud once claimed, in his very earliest project, that affect does not so much reflect or think; affect acts…However, Freud also believed that these passages of affect persist in immediate adjacency to the movements of thought: close enough that sensate tendrils constantly extend between unconscious (or, better, non-conscious) affect and conscious thought. In practice, then, affect and cognition are never fully separable—if for no other reason than that thought is itself a body, embodied.[32]

Though not imagined in full consciousness, affects act in the realm of potentiality, facilitating a body's "perpetual becoming" through the accretion of its forces.[33] Continuing a long tradition of inquiry into the capacity of the thinking body, affect theory thus attempts to account for the ways in which bodies not only receive and react to the forces of affect, but may initiate them as well.

In addition to the various kinds of performance that occur at musical events generally, the intensity of the affects that circulate among participants at punk shows in particular make such events rich environments for tracing the importance of affect as a key element of musical performance. Citing the expression of anger as the motivation behind various practices at punk shows—such as participation in the slam dance, for example—Mexico City's punks emphasize the importance of the "tocada" as an

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[31] Gregg and Seigworth, The Affect Theory Reader (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 2. Emphasis in original.
[32] Ibid, 2-3.
[33] Ibid, 3.

affective space. Both musicians and fans join in creating an environment suitable for a kind of group catharsis, an environment in which it becomes possible to "sacar la rabia."

While fan behavior plays a major role in the production of the affective action at punk shows, the musicians hold a great deal of responsibility for stimulating the circulation of valued affects, and are in fact usually the catalysts for it. The quality of the band's performance is the most important factor in the construction of the kind of affective atmosphere that makes a punk show a success. Fans highlight the fact that not all bands "call out" audience participation. Some bands play while the audience talks and laughs in a subdued manner, dividing their attention between the musical spectacle and their own sociability, wandering in and out of the performance space. Other bands create a riveting atmosphere, causing audience members meandering around or outside of the performance space to coagulate into a tightly packed human mass, surging forward towards the space in which the band is playing.

Various factors account for the great appeal of some bands and the lukewarm reception afforded to others. Generally, those bands that garner a good deal of enthusiasm perform well musically, giving the lie to stereotypes that cast punk musicians as disinterested amateurs.[34] Well-regarded punk musicians not only typically choose fast tempos, but also produce a clean, coherent sound, all band members keeping good time together. These instrumentalists generally avoid moving their bodies in ways that draw attention to their musicianship and reject flamboyant postures that might serve to emphasize a sense of their personal investment in the performance. Instead, the band appears wholly focused on its task, moving fixedly with the beat, but rarely attempting to embody it in an exaggerated fashion to engage the audience through a groove. They

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[34] Punks repeat this stereotype, as Apatía-No does, in an attempt to highlight the naturalism of punk performance. Downplaying their musical skills helps punks in an attempt to create a scene free from the hierarchies of musicians and fans present in other music scenes.

also eschew other kinds of performance that many musicians employ to underscore their artistry, such as instrumental solos or on-stage sound checks and tuning. Through tight, skilled musical execution, popular punk instrumentalists often draw attention to the high energy of the band's performance by a taking a no-fuss approach that flies in the face of more ostentatious rock music performance tropes.

A fairly subdued band of instrumentalists also serves to focus attention on the vocalist, who also usually performs in a highly concentrated, rather than a showy fashion.[35] The screamers in particular tend to hold their ground, bracing themselves as they perform their difficult bodily work. Some vocalists move between phrases, bursting out of their contorted postures as they take a quick breather. Many remain fairly still and focused, poised for the next line. By de-emphasizing their role as performers through their restrained presentation, punk musicians draw attention not only to the physical effort they expend, but also to the seriousness of their work.[36] The band largely stays out of the vocalist's way (physically, at least), maintaining focus on the importance of the words, not for their symbolic meaning but for their indexicality. Through the intensity of screaming timbres, coupled with an undemonstrative but clearly difficult delivery, vocalists' performances in particular index the anger that punk fans valorize as part of their musical experience. The band thus performs an affective labor, conveying a sense of anger as well as a sense of the great purpose of their effort, to the audience.

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[35] Of course, it's not uncommon for the vocalist to be an instrumentalist also, often a guitarist. The type of performance that these musicians choose does not seem to vary based on this factor, however. Whether tasked with playing the guitar or not, vocalists tend to conform to the highly focused presentation I outline here.

[36] Melissa Cross, Interview, 24 June, 2012. Cross has noted the link between physical and affective work in her interactions with vocalists primarily in the metal tradition, which also prizes an immediacy of expression. She says that her students "associate hard work with quality. They don't feel comfortable when it's easy." Persuading vocalists to value that kind of work above the very obvious, hard physical work that untrained vocalists use as they struggle to sustain their sound is one of the difficulties that she faces as a teacher. She tries to convince vocalists that they may still achieve expressive affects through acting their anger, rather than trying to voice it directly.

Typically, when a band performs at a level sufficiently intense to prompt heightened affective exchange with their audience, the fans become very active, bouncing in time to the beat, singing along if they have learned the lyrics in advance, or waving their fists in the air. At moments of peak intensity, a circle will open in the crowd close to the musicians, where a group of audience members will start to slam, throwing their bodies against one another, colliding and spinning with centripetal force. One of the most emphatic responses to a performance I witnessed came as a reaction to Apatía-No, the Venezuelan hardcore band that visited twice during my stay in Mexico City, playing concerts in Ecatepec, in the far north of the metropolitan zone. The band's performance of their song "La Caída del Tercer Mundo" created quite a stir among the large, tightly packed groups of fans, who expressed their excitement through enhanced physical demonstrativeness, singing along with them, dancing, and jostling one another in the dense crowd.

"La Caída del Tercer Mundo," which translates as "the fall of the third world," is a song that depicts the relations between the global North and South in stark terms as the exploiter and exploited, the bringer and receiver of first Conquest and then capitalism, two forms of warfare that have brought death and suffering to millions. While the song may strive to look simple and artless, like the sung form of a broadsheet, it does have its hooks. The text is arranged in 4-line stanzas, though two of the six overflow into five lines as though their author had randomly cut a too-long sentence in order to preserve the visual effect of a song verse. The meter is initially erratic, in keeping with the lyrics' colloquial speech style, and there is no attempt to create cohesion through other conventional techniques such as rhyme:

El primer mundo se aprovecha	The first world takes advantage
de la miseria de los paises pobres	of the misery of poor countries
L@s pobres estan obligados a pagar muy caro	The poor are obliged to pay dearly
su condición de tener grandes...	for their ownership of great…
...riquezas naturales,	natural resources

Desde siempre llegaron explotando y matando todo lo que hayaron a su paso Esclavisaron nuestra cultura, mataron millones de indígenas!!	They have always come exploiting and killing all who got in their way They enslaved our culture and killed millions of the indigenous
Hoy continúa esta explotación, pero de otra manera	Today this exploitation continues, but in another way
Ahora sus armas tienen otros nombres, BM, ACLA, FMI	Now their arms have other names…
y otros que siguen plagando y endeundando al tercer mundo	and others that continue plaguing and indebting the third world
Establecen sus grandes capitales allí… …porque saben que es mano de obra barata	They establish their great capital …because they know that it's a cheap source of labor
Se llevan todos los recursos Pagando muy mal a las personas que trabajan, explotan hombres, mujeres y niños, Es la caída del tercer mundo…	They take away all of the resources Paying people who work very badly exploiting men, women and children It's the fall of the third world[37]

As the song nears conclusion, however, switching from historical commentary to a sort of battle cry, the text becomes punchier, catchier. While never exactly regular, the text comes closer to conventional popular song form, containing word repetitions, repeated vowel sounds, and oblique rhymes:

No hay que dar tregua Ell@s no la tienen contigo No hay que seguirles el juego, algún día ell@s son los que van a caer...	You don't have to make a truce They don't do it for you You don't have to continue the game One day they will be the ones to fall
No nos rendimos, Somos las voces de l@s oprimidos!!!	Let's not surrender, We are the voices of the oppressed!!! [38]

Not much of this detail comes through in the moment of performance, however, particularly with a crowd as large and enthusiastic as this one was. The song begins with an aggressive opening flourish from the drums, and then a series of rolls with regular hits to the cymbal to create a continuous and powerful noise, occasionally broken to help mark the ends of the verses as they appear in the text. The lead guitar has a repeated figure that also performs this textual function, introducing the song and then punctuating it between stanzas with the repetition of a 4-bar ascending and descending

[37] The first two stanzas, copied from www.apatiano.webcindario.com, accessed 7 December, 2010 with my translation.
[38] Ibid.

figure with the epic feel of a Star Wars theme. Bass and a second guitar add weight and also extra noise, through which the high tenor of the lead vocalist cuts like a knife.

Though the vocalist's words are not clear in the performance space, the hoarse screaming timbre of his voice, coupled with his rushed, breathless delivery—caused by the very same uneven meter and lack of musicality of the words he must pronounce—gives his performance its heroic quality. Seeming slightly breathless as well as strained, his voice implies an urgency that colors the "angry" sound of his screamed tones. His voice implies that he is an embattled messenger as we hear his body working to produce the sound that will carry the long, intricate phrases to us, even if finally we hear more sound than sense. Emerging clearly from all of the surrounding noise lends extra poignancy to this sound, particularly when contrasted with the more distorted, menacing sounds produced by the other two vocalists. The female back-up vocalist's voice in particular provides an evocative contrast, sounding forth in a lower, false cord timbre that hints at a dystopian, disturbing world to come, against which the lead vocalist's voice—higher, clearer, and thus more conventionally "human"—pushes.

In the case of "La Caída del Tercer Mundo," the urgent voice that issues from the hard-working body sings of being oppressed, and yet of not surrendering. Through the affective impact of the lead vocalist's hard-working performance, he becomes a sort of exemplary figure, possessed of the courage and stamina not only to bear witness to the message, but also to stage a symbolic struggle against those whom he accuses in his verses through the very act of vocalization itself. He sings "at the edge," from where he has been pushed by the exploitative forces of history and global capital, but his embattled voice inspires the crowd to recognize its various limits and push back.

And push, they do. While scholars caution that affects may be subtle, leaving hardly a trace, the affective exchange that occurs among members of Mexico City's punk scene is often intense, brusque, and even conflictive. In a setting like a punk show, which

is ostensibly about entertainment and fun as well as about expressing intense feeling, there is a constant push and pull of strong affects as participants challenge one another, engaging in demonstrations of physical toughness or calling out others' behavior as unbefitting the true punk. There are all-too-frequent run-ins with the police and other authority figures who attempt, or are simply seen to attempt to repress punks' boisterousness. Though anger and rage are highly valued affects among scene participants, there is not much consensus as to how to apply them once aroused. Groups of fans at shows erupt into brawls; sleepy post-Chopo market crowds become audiences for street fighting. Men attempt to one-up each other through verbal competition that can border on the abusive. Collectives choose not to work with certain groups and individuals because of personal feuds that masquerade as irreconcilable ideological differences.

While people in the scene may lament excesses of anger or excoriate those who use their rage in destructive ways, such heightened affect remains key to living a hardcore lifestyle. The term "hardcore" may be used as though it describes a punk sub-genre, but in fact it has a far broader application. Loosely speaking, the term "hardcore," when applied to punk music, signifies the more underground form of punk that emerged after the initial punk rock boom of the 1970s. Faster and more distorted, hardcore punk is "hardcore" because it leaves behind a number of the sonic and performative trappings of hard rock, and therefore does not have the fairly broad appeal that punk rock did. "Hardcore" also describes the intensity with which musicians and fans engage with the music and other aspects of the punk scene. As the term signifies when modifying other interests such as hardcore pornography, those who

are drawn to the hardcore are drawn to experiences, and thus affects, that feel uncomfortable, extreme, or edgy to others.[39]

Not having participated in hardcore scenes before, learning to be always at the ready for such intense exchange proved to be one of the difficulties I faced throughout the period of my ethnography. Operating in such an affectively charged environment not only challenged me on the level of interactions with my interlocutors, but also impacted the kind of data that I was able to collect. My attempt to write the "encounters" I experienced is thus part of a broader attempt to analyze the importance of the heightened affects that play a key role in the creation and maintenance of a punk solidarity, a project undertaken through various types of "extreme" musical and social performances. Demonstrating an appropriate anger, such performances give punk scene participants the chance to relate to one another through rage, a collective display of affect that ideally strengthens social and political solidarity. However, the reliance on these particular vocalizations of "rage" and other performances of intense "energy" may also exacerbate tensions and divisions within the already fractious punk scene.

The concept of affective labor has drawn a great deal of scholarly attention in recent years as academic researchers have attempted to define shifts in labor practices as the global economy moves from a Fordist model of industry to the post-Fordist informational economy. As communications and service sectors grow, there is greater demand for what are sometimes called "relational workers." Long theorized by feminists as "caring work," affective labor has moved beyond the domestic sphere, forming business goals, productive of capital itself. While some cautiously celebrate this change, pointing to the mechanized, overly "rational" aspects of a Fordist model, others

[39] There is, in fact, a place where hardcore music meets hardcore pornography. Extreme metal sub-genres like grindcore or pornocore/pornogrind may mix sexual and violent themes in their lyrics, imagery, and performance. Many punk fans, being fans of extreme metal also, attend such gigs. There is also at least one person who sells hardcore pornographic materials at the Chopo market and elsewhere.

note that in many places, while affective labor may be highly moralized, it is still most often relegated to the most marginalized workers, as many states attempt to privatize social services. Nevertheless, volunteer affective laborers may passionately defend their work, finding in it a path to the kind of social belonging that used to be guaranteed by full employment under the Fordist model.[40]

Both hard physical work and affective labor are intensely moralized within Mexico City's punk scene, but there, it is punks themselves and not any direct state intervention that creates the demand. Still, it may be seen as a reaction to economic marginalization, as most young people from the barrios have no expectation of encountering regular, remunerative, and meaningful employment in El DeFectuoso. Revealing an ongoing ideological investment in male-dominated industrial labor, punks' affective labor retains an emphasis on hard physical work as key to its demonstration of "citizenship," in this case, of belonging to the punk scene.

As Amanda Weidman warns, ideologies of voice "both enable and silence" certain subjects through its disciplines.[41] In the case of Mexico City's punk scene, the valuation of hard physical work as key to punk aesthetics and affective power may form part of the reason why there are so few women and even fewer people who openly embrace non-heteronormative sexualities in the scene. This troubled relationship complicates Michael Hardt's hope for the development of "biopower from below," as he himself cautions.[42] Within circumscribed limits imposed by performances of traditional

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[40] Writing about the rise of state-sponsored voluntarism in Italy, for example, Andrea Muehlebach indicates that many volunteer workers are those who were forced to retire early when factories shut down in the 1990s. The Italian state also has tried to create a pool of volunteer affective laborers among the nation's large population of unemployed young people. She comments, "[State] interventions have created a regime in which unwaged labor is wedded to intense moralization, even sanctification. … Affective labor remedies not material poverty but collective relational crisis… It is the unwaged participation of citizens in affective voluntary action that is considered key to societal stability. And it is unwaged labor that has become an exemplary act of citizenship." Meuhlebach, "On Affective Labor in Post-Fordist Italy" in Cultural Anthropology, vol. 26, no. 1 (2011), 59-82.
[41] Amanda Weidman, Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 14.
[42] Michael Hardt, "Affective Labor" in boundary 2, vol. 26, no. 2 (1999), 100.

masculinity, Mexico City's punk scene nevertheless indicates one route for a recalibration of affect and value, a project that relies heavily on musical practices. The forcefulness of the affects that punk musicians animate through musical performance also circulates through more colloquial encounters, shaping the dynamics of other forms of linguistic production, from everyday speech to fanzine writing.

5.3 Speech, Song, and the Written Word

Because of the close relationship between punk song lyrics, the writing in fanzines, and everyday speech, engaging in various types of linguistic performance allows punks to embody a valued punk ethic. As ethnomusicologist Aaron Fox noted in his study of a working-class Texas country music scene, "vocality exceeds textuality" in the context of musical performance, but the voice remains "bound to the word" in the oral culture of its musicians and fans.[43] Emphasizing the ways in which song makes the aural and visceral evidence of the singer's body plain, Fox concludes, "Singing is by its very nature phatic communication."[44] Still, the language of song signifies differently as the singing voice becomes a speaking voice becomes a singing voice again. Linking the sociability of musical performance with ordinary sociability through the ways in which the poetics and performance of country music permeate everyday speech, Fox reveals the key role that music plays in constructing a shared expressive language among country music fans and practitioners, a language found not only in music, and not only in talk about music, but in talk generally. Through the poetics of an inherently thoughtful and experimental linguistic play, the "real country" singing and speaking voice becomes

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[43] Aaron A. Fox, Real Country: Music and Language in Working-Class Culture (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 272.
[44] Ibid. Emphasis in original. Phatic speech acts are those that privilege the establishment or maintenance of social relations above the transmission of symbolic meaning.

"a summarizing symbol of identity and a fundamental medium of class-conscious social practice."[45]

While there is very little "shop talk" about the particulars of musical creation and performance among the punks I spent time with—a lack that serves to buttress claims to naturalism in punk performance—song lyrics do find their way into everyday conversation, sometimes in moments of spontaneous performance. While audience members may be encouraged to take over the microphone in the context of a punk show or to sing along in the crowd, outside of the context of the gig being a punk vocalist becomes a group endeavor. Impromptu group performances of punk songs is a common pastime among Mexico City's punks, a practice that may be prompted by the presence of a guitarist, by the radio playing in the background, or even in the absence of any musical accompaniment or inspiration. Such bursts of song might be extended street sing-a-longs or brief interludes that serve to break or embellish spoken conversation.

Such group performances are important moments of solidarity among a group whose sociality often appears more bracing and conflictive than open and friendly. Everyday conversation among those who frequent Mexico City's punk scene often serves as an opportunity for competitive speech, from joking to boasting to gossip that may frame someone as exemplary or sorely lacking in the qualities that make a true punk. While my punk friends did not speak specifically about their musical performance, there was a great deal of talk about the practice of "albures," the competitive form of joking long associated with working class Mexican men.[46]

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[45] Ibid, 273.
[46] The practice of albures is in some ways similar to "playing the dozens" among some populations of African-Americans, particularly men. A verbal contest, the formgenerally involves a quick call-and-response pattern of insults between two participants in front of an audience. The short rejoinders may or may not rhyme. Among sociologists, the practice has been traced back to various African cultures as well as to the founding of rapping as a musical form in North American urban culture.

Several of my male punk friends claimed never to engage in the practice. Others joked about it, highlighting the homoeroticism they felt to be latent in the desire to dominate other men and poking fun at those who they accused of participating in it. Not infrequently, the topic was ostensibly brought up as a warning to me, my interlocutors advising me that I was unlikely to be able to understand such wit and therefore easily fall prey to it.

For, although men in the punk scene might claim not to engage in "albures," there is in fact a great deal of joking among them that seems to fulfill the same purpose that "albures" do, of renegotiating status. Though my collaborators seldom engaged in outright wars of words with sex as their explicit subject matter, everyday conversation was permeated with the same kind of punning and double-talk that forms the basis for the practice of "albures." Men also commented one another's opinions on political and social topics with the same edgy humor. In conversation among a group in which any one person began to dominate through the expression of opinion or feeling, the speaker was frequently met with a chorus of expressions like "no mames, güey!", a phrase that can mingle a teasing or dismissive aim with incredulity as it reaffirms friendship through the repetition of the term "güey."[47] Roger Abrahams describes these kinds of joking expressions or practices as imbued with the "power of justness:"

> —as in "just kidding" or "just pulling your leg"—which embodies a bid for exemption from the rules of friendly conversation. … Discomforting social messages often lie just below the surface of many formulaic routines. Conventional formulas serve to induce acceptance of aggression even among the best of friends. The trick may be as simple as using familiar routines to induce the complicity of others in the encounter, culminating in the release of energies

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[47] The verb "mamar" translates as "to suck," as in the nursing of an infant at the breast ("mama" being the term for the mammary gland), though the expression "no mames" may be understood to convey a more sexualized connotation. The expression is impolite, and a substitute, "no manches," has evolved to take its place. My interlocutors claim that it has no particular meaning apart from its value as a substitute for the vulgar phrase. "Güey" is a virtually ubiquitous term used among men and increasingly women, used similarly to the word "mate" among some groups of Anglophone men. Originally, "güey" was another word for "bull."

engineered by laughing together. Potentially explosive social motives often emerge in playful circumstances.[48]

Writing specifically in the Latin American context, in Nicaragua, anthropologist Roger Lancaster considers these kinds of aggressive exchanges as performances of "machismo," among which he includes "drinking, gambling, risk taking, asserting one's opinion, fighting, [and] the conquest of women."[49] These performances of machismo create an economy of social value:

> …machismo produces and circulates values: the value of men and women. What is ultimately produced…is one's social standing. Machismo is more, too, than a political conceit of the body politic. It conceives myriad politics and inscribes all bodies with power. Machismo is a real political economy of the body, a field of power entailing every bit as much force as economic production.[50]

For those who do not excel at the types of exchanges that Lancaster categorizes as "machismo," the result is a loss of face, humiliation and a sense of endangered masculinity. But even for those who win, the victory never lasts. Lancaster comments, "As a gestural system, machismo has a steep temporal dimension, and yesterday's victories count for little tomorrow."[51] The verbal sparring in which participants in Mexico City's punk scene engage thus reveals another ever-present form of exertion. While some scene participants strive to rid their joking of overtly sexualized, potentially abusive subject matter and language, the competition itself privileges the creative work

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[48] Roger D. Abrahams, Everyday Life: A Poetics of Everyday Practice (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 24.

[49] Roger Lancaster, Life Is Hard: Machismo, Danger, and The Intimacy of Power in Nicaragua (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 236. Lancaster's book is one of a small body of work published in recent years about masculinity in Latin America. Following Matthew Gutmann's landmark study, The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), a number of authors have critiqued the notion that Mexican men seek to live up to a "macho" ideal. Especially through attention to men's family and sexual lives, these authors illustrate the plurality of masculinities that exist even among Mexican men who might be grouped together by other broad demographic considerations, such as economic class. Nevertheless, instead of the "macho," these scholars engage with other terms identified by Americo Paredes, such as "hombres de verdad" and "muy hombre," expressions used to denote an idealized Mexican masculinity. Attempting to debunk the stereotype of the macho in order to posit the existence of multiple Mexican masculinities, Gutmann comments little on what the persistence of the "hombre de verdad" ideal might mean to the gendering of multiple modern Mexican subjects. See also Paredes, "Estados Unidos, México, y el Machismo" in Journal of Inter-American Studies, vol. 9 no.1 (1967), 65-84.

[50] Lancaster, 236.

[51] Ibid, 237.

of a quick, sharp, and indomitable wit as a basis for valuation in the scene's social economy.

Though joking rivalry rarely spills directly over into a physical fight in the "macho" economy through which participants in the punk scene negotiate status, violent conflict in response to real or imagined insults among them is not uncommon. Practices such as group vocalization of song lyrics thus play an important role, providing a unifying experience to counterbalance disruptions of excessive competition or violence. Because song lyrics function as repositories of shared points of view, shared experiences, and shared sentiments, voicing them stabilizes a sense of commonality and good will among a group of vocalists. Physically drawing together, punks demonstrate the pleasure of moving shared, "archival" knowledge back to the realm of performance, of the "repertoire," in the language that Diana Taylor has created to describe the practice in her book on the performance of cultural memory.[52]

Refiguring a historically perceived rift between spoken and written language through recourse to her terminology of archive and repertoire, Taylor points out the ways in which the supposedly permanent information of cultural "archives" is actually dependent on the embodied transmission of knowledge. Though people may attempt to record performances of embodied cultural knowledge through the documentary tools of the archive, performances always outpace the ability of such tools to capture them. Similarly, though writing has often been shown to function as a tool of the powerful, representing a specialized realm of knowledge, Taylor also demonstrates the ways in which written forms of knowledge depend upon the practices of the repertoire for them to achieve their full power. Song lyrics are a prime example of this relationship. As written texts, they may and do circulate for their value as verse, texts that demonstrate

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[52] Diana Taylor, The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

some of the creative license of poetry. But it is in the performance of song lyrics that they display their most meaningful aspect, assuming the power to create feelings of unity and solidarity among performers and listeners through both their symbolic and indexical qualities.

In addition to the ways in which performing written texts demonstrates the entanglement of the archive and the repertoire, punk practice of written forms not specifically destined for performance also illuminates strong links between live speech and written texts. Many people in the punk scene compare the heightened punk vocalization of song lyrics to the role that fanzines play. Though the texts of punk songs are not necessarily intelligible in performance, both punk songs and fanzine writing are promoted as means by which punks engage in the anarchist practice of "autogestión," a kind of independent self-development through which people educate and inform themselves about important issues. Indeed, song lyrics may be printed in fanzines so that readers may learn from them in a written context. Fanzines also frequently include essays on historical and contemporary political and social topics, prose poetry, interviews with musicians and other well-known figures, vegan recipes, comic strips, and more. Intended to inform even as they entertain, fanzines are created through a simple, Do-It-Yourself ethic and aesthetic. Often constructed through cut-and-paste techniques with hand-drawn or photocopied illustrations, fanzines also typically reproduce colloquial speech forms from everyday rhetorical prose to the slogans that activists use at mass demonstrations.

On the crowded front cover of an edition of the locally produced fanzine Pensares y Sentires ("Thoughts and Feelings" #30, June/July 2007), various slogan-like texts ring an image of "la banda," a cartoonish drawing of four interlocked figures with their hair in dreadlocks or spiked, their clothes emblazoned with the encircled "A" symbol of anarchism, with one raising a fist in defiance. The image is anchored by a

block-lettered caption proclaiming the four figures to be "Anarko-Punks." Hovering above the band of friends within the colored block of the image, a white block text proclaims, "Mientras exista un tirano la lucha no ha terminado" ("While there exists a tyrant the struggle has not ended"). Above the image and just under the title information, the editors have printed two more exclamations: "¡Viva la otra campaña!" ("Long live the Other Campaign!") and "el pueblo unida [sic] jamás será vencido" ("The people united will never be defeated"). The first line of text makes reference to the Zapatista-led "otra campaña," an attempt to unify indigenous communities and their supporters throughout Mexico and beyond. Like the "viva," the second phrase is a common refrain at rallies and demonstrations.

Beneath the image, there is one more free-floating text that proclaims, "Presos politicos y de conciencia libertad, Abajo los muros de las prisiones" ("Political prisoners and those of free conscience, down with prison walls"). And finally, there is a block of a quasi-free, poetic text at the bottom of the page that reads as follows:

> LA DIGNIDAD, LA REBELDÍA, EL AMOR, BUSCARAN EN NUESTROS CORAZONES, LAS ANSIAS DE TRANSFORMACIONES, LIBRES Y ACRATAS LLENAS DE HUMANIDAD Y FUERZA, PARA LA CONTINUA LUCHA CONTRA LA EXPLOTACIÓN Y LA SOBERBIA DE LOS QUE NO VEN Y BUSCAN EN SUS CORAZONES.[53]

Within the fanzine, there are reprints of newspaper articles, song lyrics from a Colombian punk band, reproductions of emails between punks and one attributed to the imprisoned ex-Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, and editorials on various political themes.

Despite the diverse style of these varied forms of written texts, created by various authors within and beyond the punk scene, the interpenetration of written and

[53] "Dignity, rebellion, love, we will find them in our hearts, anxieties of transformation, free and without authority filled with humanity and strength, for the continuing struggle against the exploitation and arrogance of those who do not look and search into their hearts." Text printed in block capitals in the original.

performed speech and song is evident in its pages. More importantly, through the practice of writing fanzines, punks reaffirm a sense of solidarity and communal identity. Putting out a fanzine is one of the primary tasks of any punk collective in Mexico City. For some, it is their only significant public instantiation, through which they voice their belonging to the greater scene by participating in its written economy, demonstrating its mastery of shared speech forms, as well as a similarity of opinion and purpose. These types of written performances thus help to balance the abrupt, competitive interpersonal exchanges in the punk scene as musical performances do, reminding participants of the "thoughts and feelings" they share, expressed through common vocal and linguistic tropes.

Fox's understanding of the ways in which hardcore country music fans make meaning by playing with the loose boundaries between speech and song thus provides a model for my approach to the making of meaning in punk. My endeavor nevertheless involves a more triangulated relationship—between musical performance, speech, and the written word. The hard-working punk voice performs a kind of toil in the context of musical performance by adopting physically and affectively taxing vocal techniques, but punk voices both on and off stage also work through the production and reproduction of a shared language of resistance as an antidote to the more disruptive verbal practices that animate their social economy. Through their hard work vocalizing lyrics created with an eye to producing an expressive, informative text rather than an ear to easily flowing, musical language and by employing difficult, physically punishing vocal techniques, punk vocalists attempt to perform the solidarity evoked in punk discourse, from song lyrics to fanzine texts.

5.4 Exemplary Performance and the Construction of Heroic Punk Voices

After Aaron Fox analyzed a politics of voice among working-class North Americans, anthropologist Amanda Weidman carried out a study of vocal politics in southern India, though with one important difference. Weidman lauds Fox and his colleagues for founding a "vocal anthropology," based in careful analyses of the voice in both its sonic and material aspects.[54] However, drawing on postcolonial critiques of "the ideological underpinnings of the project of recovering lost or subaltern voices,"[55] Weidman sees the vocal anthropology of Fox and his colleagues as part of a metaphoric understanding of the voice as representation, which leads to the fetishization of a voice presumed to be a natural site of agency and resistance. In addition to careful analysis of vocal practice, Weidman looks for "moments when self-conscious discourse about the voice arises."[56] Such moments provide guidance into the ways in which particular cultures construct ideologies about the voice, which in turn guide the formation of specific, historically locatable, culturally valorized voices.

> …I use the concept of "politics of voice" or ideology of voice" to emphasize that practices of voice, while creative, are also a mode of discipline—embodied and performed—through which subjects are produced. I suggest that ideas about the voice and its significance are motivated by historically and culturally locatable practices of voice, rather than by supposedly universal bodily experience. And since ideologies of voice determine what voices come to be heard and how, understanding them as particular and changeable is essential to understanding the kinds of subjects and politics they both enable and silence.[57]

Like Weidman, I see the triple linguistic play that animates punk speech, song, and the written word through the lens of a self-conscious discourse, as a type of discipline that enables the construction of certain sanctioned voices. Specifically, the

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[54] Amanda Weidman, 13. She is not specifically referring to Fox's Real Country here, but to an article he co-authored with David Samuels, Thomas Porcello, and Stephen Feld, "Vocal Anthropology" in A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology, ed. Alessandro Duranti (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 321-345.
[55] Weidman, 11.
[56] Ibid, 12.
[57] Ibid, 14.

speaking, writing, and singing voices of Mexico City's punk scene are created through the discourse of "autogestión," which may be translated as "self-development" or "self-government."

Defined as a group of everyday practices that form the basis of an autonomous society, set apart in some way from government rule, "autogestión" is a touchstone for Mexico City's punk scene. Information on practices of anarchism, like "autogestión," began to infiltrate Mexico City's punk scene through various means in the 1980s. In the late 1970s into the 80s, as several of my interlocutors recount, punk youth were not very interested in social problems, and in fact, may have augmented problems like youth violence in the barrios. Punks in particular were associated with gangs that had formed out in the city's most marginalized zones, creating conflicts among themselves and having regular, brutal confrontations with the police. The ruling PRI government devised various strategies to try to curb youth violence, and arguably to co-opt the youth vote, largely through cultural programming aimed at marginal youth.[58] While suspicion of the government-run programs increased as time went on, punks and historians of youth culture in Mexico City claim that the youth themselves ultimately decided to intervene in the problem of gang violence.[59] According to an oft-told tale in scene lore, what once were gangs became the forerunners of punk collectives.

To some extent, the growing social conscience and networking habits of punks in Mexico City mirrored trends in hardcore punk scenes in other parts of the world, especially in California, which was linked to the Mexican scene particularly through cross-border interactions in Tijuana.[60] As Alan O'Connor describes, punks in North

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[58] See Héctor Castillo-Berthier, "My Generation: Rock and la Banda's Forced Survival Opposite the Mexican State" in Rockin' Las Américas: The Global Politics of Rock in Latin/o America, ed. Deborah Pacini Hernandez et. al. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), 241-260.
[59] José Augstín, La Contracultura en México (México, D.F.: Random House Mondadori, 1996).
[60] Mariza Urteaga Castro-Pozo, Por Los Territorios del Rock: Identidades Juveniles y Rock Mexicano (México, D.F.: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes/Culturas Populares, 1998).

American scenes were then forging DIY networks through which to foster independent record production and distribution, as well as other creative and social projects.[61] In addition to the influence of DIY networks in North American scenes, some of the participants in Mexico City's punk scene who were active in the 1980s tell another story. They credit a new friendship between young punk kids and aging Spanish anarchists, who had settled as refugees in Mexico after the Spanish Civil War, as the catalyst for a re-flowering of Mexican anarchism—particularly anarchist practices like "autogestión"—in the context of the punk scene.[62]

Found in anarchist writing as far back as Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the concept of "autogestión" is a self-conscious discourse on the role that quotidian practices like community education and group decision-making play in the construction of autonomous societies.[63] In the Chopo market one day, for example, a participant in the punk scene who was also involved with the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir, was handing out small pamphlets on the subject of "autogestión." The pamphlets contained the following definition:

> We understand "autogestión" as all of the options for social and communitarian self-organization, in which the community itself—whether it be a union, a cooperative, a group of "campesinos," of women, retired people, the marginalized or whatever other oppressed social sector in our society—takes into its own hands the task of seeing to its necessities…. We understand as "autogestión" a series of practical principles that form the basic functions of a self-governing society:
>
> Direct Democracy
> Direct Action
> Mutual Aid
> Outreach
> Training[64]

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[61] O'Connor, Punk Record Labels and the Struggle for Autonomy.
[62] Anonymous, "Appendix: Beyond the White Punk Ghetto: Punk in Mexico in Rolling Thunder: an anarchist journal of dangerous living, vol. 7 (2009), 75-77.
[63] O'Connor remarks on the tendency of Mexican punks to form collectives. Though not unheard of in other punk scenes, he sees the practice as particularly important to the Mexico City punk scene in his comparison of four scenes across North America, in "Local Scenes, Dangerous Crossroads."
[64] Acción Libertaria, ed. Auto-gestión: Un Proyecto de Practica Cotidiana (México, D.F.: self-published pamphlet, undated). "Direct democracy" is defined in the pamphlet as self-governance without intermediaries

While there may be some dispute about the meaning and best practices under the first three headings among various anarchist thinkers and groups, as well as among Mexico City's punk scene, "outreach" and "training" activities are especially emphasized in local punk practice, educational outreach being virtually ubiquitous at events that punks frequent. The production and distribution of fanzines and punk records, as well as the organization of gigs, are among the most common ways in which punks pursue the self and community education of "autogestión" and prompt others to engage in it too. Through the discourse of "autogestión," Mexico City's punks also engage in a self-conscious discourse on vocal politics, of the kind that Amanda Weidman identifies as a necessary corollary to a "vocal anthropology."

The Spanish anarchists who came to influence young people in Mexico City's punk scene arrived as exiles fleeing Franco's retribution towards the end of the Spanish Civil War.[65] Most of them settled in Mexico City. In the 1980s, a small circle of the former exiles began to reach out to the same marginalized youth that the PRI government had set its sights on. While some punks complain that only a very select little group of punk youth had the chance to come to know the Spanish anarchists, one substantial bond at least was formed. Ricardo Mestre Ventura, who had created the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir, an independent library of radical literature in Mexico City, took a punk youth as his protégé and then entrusted him with the care of the library upon his

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or representatives, relying on consensus to reach agreement and avoiding where possible a majority vote. "Direct action" is not well distinguished from direct democracy in this pamphlet, restating that without intermediaries, people must make their own agreements. Direct action is a fairly contested ideas among scene integrants. Finally, "mutual aid" is described as the fostering of solidarity as an ethical practice.

[65] During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the Mexican government supported the Spanish Republican cause, providing financial and diplomatic assistance as well as supplies. For a history of Spanish exile in Mexico, see Clara E. Lida, Caleidoscopio del exilio: actores, memoria, identidades (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 2009).

death in 1997. The library was a great resource for members of the punk scene, who used it not only as an informational site, but also as a meeting place.[66]

After the closure of the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir due to financial problems in 2009, and in spite of complaints about how accessible it had been even in its prime, the Spanish anarchists' influence could still be felt through a continuing interest in the Spanish Civil War and its legacy among the punk scene. On one occasion, I accompanied a handful of punk friends to a showing of Republican propaganda films from the Spanish Civil War period. On another, I witnessed a lecture by Clara Lida, a prominent historian of social movements in Europe and Latin America, and an expert on the Spanish Republican experience of exile in Mexico. Several of the vendors at the Chopo itself sold literature on the Spanish Civil War, and the subject not infrequently cropped up as a topic of fanzine writing.

In fact, the anarchism that motivated Spanish Republicans had close ties to anarchist concerns that had shaped the Mexican Revolution and its aftermath. For anarchist participants in Mexico City's punk scene, befriending exiles from the Spanish Civil War was to form part of this feedback loop between Mexican and Spanish anarchism in the 20th century. In particular, questions of land distribution became central to both struggles.

As a result of the Spanish Conquest of the Americas, Mexican peasants had suffered from an ever-increasing centralization of arable lands in the hands of a powerful elite. In the early 1900s, after nearly 100 years of freedom from Spanish rule, Mexicans again found themselves struggling against foreign presence and economic

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[66] When I began my interactions with Mexico City's punk scene in late 2008, my new interlocutors stressed the importance of the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir, and urged me to visit. By then, its caretakers had been faced with financial and logistical problems—not having ownership of a space, and therefore having to rent one—for some time. It was not easy to get access to the library, and many people in the punk scene grumbled about its inaccessibility. I did visit the library several times, however, to borrow books, do some volunteer work, and attend meetings, before its foreclosure in 2009.

dominance openly courted by Porfirio Díaz, the dictator who had reigned over Mexico since 1876. During the "Porfiriato," the plight of landless peasants increased as Díaz spurred commercial agriculture through schemes that enabled elites to acquire additional territory while suppressing labor rights and costs.[67] In addition to shoring up the privileges of Mexico's small land-holding class, Díaz allowed the sale of the country's natural resources—such as highly lucrative mining and petroleum interests—to encourage capitalist investment in Mexico by foreign powers such as France, England, Germany, and the United States.[68]

Organized resistance began cropping up against Díaz around the turn of the twentieth century, intensifying throughout the decade until revolution finally broke out in 1910. While the necessity for agrarian reform was a key motivator for many who rebelled, as time went on, differences would emerge among competing revolutionary factions regarding the extent of their devotion to that cause. Among the most prominent agitators before 1910 was Ricardo Flores Magón, who helped to found the newspaper Regenaración in 1900 and participated in the formation of the Partido Liberal Mexicano in 1901, thenceforth using Regenaración as an outlet for anti-Díaz propaganda and a platform for the liberals' position on various social issues, including land reform.[69]

In the aftermath of the 1910 Mexican revolution, however, which was followed by civil war through the rest of the decade, a great deal of disagreement and ultimately bloodshed occurred over the question of land reform. Some historians refer to various revolutionary figures as either Magonistas or Maderistas, adhering to the ideals articulated by Flores Magón and the PLM or those expressed by Francisco Madero, the

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[67] Michael J. Gonzales, The Mexican Revolution 1910-1940. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 10.
[68] As foreign speculation and ownership increased in Mexico, haciendas might be altered or sold outright as its use for concerns other than agriculture was deemed more lucrative, stripping peasants of their only means to a livelihood. Migration to the cities and to the United States began to increase during this time.
[69] Initially, Flores Magón and his circle avoided using the term "anarchist" to describe their politics. After exile in the United States, however, during which Flores Magón became friendly with a number of radical activists like Emma Goldman, he became more forthright about his anarchist ideals.

son of a prominent "hacendado" who resented the incursion of foreign interests in Mexico, but had less interest in land expropriation.[70] Emiliano Zapata was reportedly a reader of Regeneración, and led a fierce group of peasant fighters from the state of Morelos, united largely by their desire for agrarian reform.[71]

The call for "tierra y libertad"—land and liberty—became a rallying cry during the Mexican revolution and its aftermath, and would later be adopted by Spanish Republicans. In fact, many of the reforms advocated by Flores Magón and his circle were published in a 1906 PLM manifesto that ultimately formed a basis for the rewritten Mexican constitution, created in 1917.[72] Article 27 of the new constitution expressly addressed land reform, stating that all land was property of the state, which had the power to distribute it according to its "social function," widely interpreted as its potential for agricultural use. The Spanish Republican Constitution of 1931 in turn drew a great deal of its inspiration from the post-revolutionary Mexican Constitution of 1917, particularly in regard to property rights.[73]

To some extent, important revolutionary actors Magón and Zapata both correspond to the "outlaw" profile of traditional Mexican folk heroes lionized in the populist "corridos," ballads that narrate the daring exploits of larger-than-life figures, living beyond the reach of law and order.[74] Zapata was a farmer from a peasant village who rose to prominence in part for his excellent horsemanship and military prowess. As the post-revolutionary civil war ground on, pitting various armies against one another after the overthrow of Díaz in 1910, Zapata's army became legendary through stories of

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[70] Madero ultimately served as President of Mexico from 1911 until his assassination in 1913.
[71] Gonzales.
[72] Chaz Bufe and Mitchell Cowen Verter, eds. Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magón Reader (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2005).
[73] Thomas Ankersen and Thomas Ruppert, "Tierra y Libertad: The Social Function Doctrine and Land Reform in Latin America" in Tulane Environmental Law Journal, vol. 19, 96. The Weimar Republic, Chile, and Colombia also followed the Mexican example in their own constitutional efforts.
[74] In fact, both men have had various corridos composed to honor their memories. For corridos about Flores Magón, see Jose Muñoz Cota, Ricardo Flores Magón: Corridos (México: Editorial Castalia, 1963).

its toughness and single-minded devotion to forcing a land reform agenda. Zapata and his followers were viewed as humble peasant men fighting in solidarity with all "campesinos."[75] In addition to his righteousness and his cunning, Zapata also was revered for representing an idealized masculinity—a handsome and dashing horseman, he was reputedly a great womanizer.[76]

Magón also led an outlaw's life, though there was not much of the warrior about him. A man of letters, he would not be deterred from written attacks on the Díaz regime. When the government managed to close down the printing operations of one of his newspapers, he would find a way to renew circulation or open another. Ultimately, he was forced into exile in the United States, and then faced persecution by the federal authorities there. He was repeatedly brought to trial on various charges and imprisoned on a series of short sentences. Finally, in 1918, Flores Magón was caught up in the general crackdown on radical activists that also saw the deportation of prominent public figures like the anarchist Emma Goldman and the imprisonment of anti-war activists like the socialist Eugene Debs. Flores Magón was charged with violating the Espionage Act of 1917 for writing a manifesto that was alleged to hamper the war effort, and was finally imprisoned at Leavenworth Penitentiary, where he died in custody under suspicious circumstances in 1922.[77]

Despite their different forms of leadership, Zapata and Flores Magón are similar figures in that they each may be seen as embodying the "sembrador," the planter of seeds. With "tierra y libertad" forming a major ideological underpinning for the revolutionary urge in Mexico, "sowing" was not only valorized as an honorable

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[75] Gonzales.
[76] Francesco Taboada Tabone, dir. Los Ultimos Zapatistas: heroes olvidados (Mexico, 2006), DVD, 70 minutes. The same was said of Spanish exile Ricardo Mestre Ventura, about whom a punk interlocutor told me a series of tales attesting to his sexual prowess.
[77] Bufe and Verter, 94. Though Flores Magón had been in poor health and the official medical report claimed that he died of cardiac arrest, his body was said to have shown signs of a struggle, with bruises around the face and neck.

agricultural practice, but as a metaphor for spreading revolutionary ideals. With his roots in an indigenous farming community, Zapata was a "sembrador" who literally sowed the land. Magón was a "sembrador" too, but in his role as an agitator and as an educator to the reluctant masses. In a piece published in Regeneración in 1910, Magón describes the duties and the plight of the "sembrador":

> The sower of ideals must struggle against the masses, who are conservative, against institutions, which are likewise conservative; and alone, surrounded by the comings and goings of a herd that does not understand him, he walks through the world not hoping for any reward more than fools slapping him in the face, tyrants throwing him in jail and, at any moment, the scaffold. Yet nevertheless, as long as he can sow, sow, sow, the sower of seeds will continue sowing, sowing, sowing…[78]

Spanish Republican exile in Mexico City, Ricard Mestre Ventura may likewise be viewed as a "sembrador," having opened a library of radical literature after fleeing the consequences of his revolutionary activities in Spain. As more recent examples, members of the EZLN also embrace a similar role. Drawing on histories of agrarian uprisings and embracing a modern form of the "tierra y libertad" campaign, Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, as a representative of the EZLN, engages in a "war of words," sending missives from the Selva Lacandona out to the press, to world leaders, to various popular groups and individuals. In the late 1990s, Zaptista communities invited people around the world to their "encuentros," sowing solidarity through their meetings.[79]

From the EZLN and from Mexican revolutionary-era figures like Flores Magón and Zapata, as well as from Spanish Republican exiles like Mestre Ventura, Mexico City's punks draw on a storied tradition of revolutionary heroism that combines the tough autonomy of the outlaw with the erudite zeal of the "sembrador" into a humble,

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[78] Flores Magón, "Sowing" translated and re-published in Bufe and Verter, 244-245.
[79] See for example Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising: Writings of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, ed. Ziga Vodovnik (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2004).

everyman hero who gives all of his labor, even relinquishing his life, for the long-cherished cause of land and liberty. Embodying such heroism through the intense effort of their vocal and affective practices, Mexican punks also play the "sembrador" by using musical performance as part of their project of "autogestión."[80]

Exemplifying the "sembrador," the vocalist of the influential, now-defunct, but still highly popular band Desobediencia Civil draws on the language of anarchism and historical references to resistance in order to shape an inspiring, didactic profile of the ideal punk subject in "Anarko Punks." Part of the band's 2001 studio album, No Hay Libertad Sin Desobediencia ("There is No Liberty Without Disobedience"), the song is constructed through a traditional verse-chorus format, with an unusually catchy, anthem-like chorus employing repeated lines and internal rhymes.[81]

Anarko Punks

Tenemos muchos muertos pero no han podido	We have many dead but they haven't been able to
matar al punk ni acabar al anarquismo	kill punk nor stop anarchism
Los luchadores mueren pero las ideas germinan	The fighters die but their ideas germinate
en jóvenes concientes que practican la anarquía	in conscientious youths who practice anarchy
y que muestran sin miedo su coraje y rebeldía	and demonstrate without fear their anger & rebellion
Punks anarquistas del campo y la ciudad	Anarchist punks from the country and city
Anarko Punks buscando la igualdad	Anarcopunks searching for equality
Punks anarquistas del campo y la ciudad	Anarchist punks from the country and city
Anarko Punks sembrando libertad	Anarcopunks sowing liberty
Nuestros espíritus serán siempre indom[in]ables	Our spirits will always remain indomitable
y eso[s] burgueses, ustedes bien lo saben	and those bourgeois, you know very well
podrán torturarnos, reprimirnos dia tras dia	they'll torture us, reprimand us day after day
pero nuestros sueños seguirán siempre con vida	but our dreams will always remain alive
Punks anarchistas del campo y la ciudad…	Anarchist punks from the country and city…
No solo sembrando,tambien resistiendo	Not just sowing, also resisting
No solo resistiendo,tambien luchando	Not just resisting, also struggling
Luchando y atacando al jodido estado	Struggling and attacking the fucking state
a sus instituciones y sus leyes que dan asco	its institutions and its laws that cause our disgust
Punks anarchistas del campo y la ciudad…	Anarchist punks from the country and city…

[80] The concept of sowing seeds has also inspired other Mexican anarchist projects. A contemporary anarchist collective in Mexico City incorporates the word for "seed" in its title, while the writings of Flores Magón were published in two volumes under the title Semilla Libertaria by an earlier group. See, Flores Magón, Semilla Libertaria: Artículos (México, D.F.: Grupo Cultural Ricardo Flores Magón, 1923).

[81] Desobediencia Civil, No Hay Libertad Sin Desobediencia (Mexico City: Cryptas Records, 2001).

Patria, religión, escuela, familia cárceles, ejército, leyes, policía Estas son las armas para condicionarte pero nuestras mentes seran siempre inalcanzables	Patrimony, religion, school, family prisons, military, laws, police These arms with which they condition you but our minds are always out of their reach.
Punks anarquistas del campo y la ciudad	Anarchist punks from country and city…[82]

With his hoarse, gravelly shouting voice, the singer enunciates the long, difficult lines at a fairly rapid tempo—about 150 beats per minute—but without sounding rushed and breathless. Relying on the frequent and even regular placement of the vowels within each line, the vocalist creates a more declarative, confident sound than he might accomplish with a text written with less internal phonetic coherence, with more haphazardly placed vowels. In this song, he pauses slightly on the strategically placed open vowel sounds, gathering the energy to tackle the multi-syllabic phrase to come. Or, he lingers for musical effect, elongating vowel sounds in order to emphasize and vary his screaming timbre.

In the third verse, for example, there is a great deal of repetition of the "o" vowel sound (no solo sembrando, también resistiendo…). Pausing slightly on the first "o" of "solo," the vocalist then hovers markedly on the final "o" of "sembrando." There is a very slight pause on the more closed "e" vowel sound at the end of "también," before the vocalist quickly enunciates the five syllables of "resistiendo," with a slight accent on the "e" and then a drawn out vocalization of the final "o." The effect of his vowel pronunciation is most obvious at the end of the verse, which finishes with three open vowel sounds in quick succession—"dan asco." Drawing out the first "a" slightly, the vocalist then stretches out the second "a" a bit more, and finally comes to a rest on the ultimate "o," converting it from the tail end of a recognizable word into a non-linguistic utterance, an angry roar.

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[82] Lyrics found on http://www.musica.com/letras.asp?letra=1971607, accessed 22 April, 2012. I've made some small changes to the transcriber's use of capital letters, spelling, and other small details.

Beneath him, the band supports his articulation, the guitars repeating a two-bar figure in common time that begins with syncopation and then rights itself on the 7th and 8th beats, two quarter notes played on the beat in succession. The drummer also helps to highlight the voice. Keeping time with regular eighth-note hits to the cymbal, but then resting on the final 7th and 8th beats, the drummer allows the voice to dominate at the end of each line, underscored by the suddenly simple rhythm articulated by the guitars.

The construction and enunciation of these lyrics allows the vocalist to deliver the message of the song through indexical signifiers that suggest anger and defiance, but with a steady, open, declarative sound that confidently frames the anarcopunk figure. This idealized anarcopunk is one who lays claim to various past acts of resistance as part of his heritage, who voices solidarity between people who labor for equality in both country and city, and who undertakes the important task of "sowing liberty." Demonstrating through vocal performance an ethics based on the value of hard work—both the physical work of vocalization and the emotional labor involved in expressing an appropriate response to the dire circumstances described by punk lyrics—punk vocalists, like the vocalist of Desobediencia Civil, serve as models of proper affect and behavior in the moment of performance. Fans who sing along, either temporarily standing in for a vocalist who has passed the mike or in spontaneous everyday vocalization, also take part in this exemplary performance shaped by the values of "autogestión."

5.5 Gendering Punk Performance—Women's Work

Of course, in addition to symbolizing the sowing of land and revolutionary consciousness grounded in struggles for "tierra y libertad," the figure of the "sembrador" is also intensely gendered, suggesting the "seed and soil" metaphors for procreation that exist in various cultures around the world. For example, Carol Delaney writes about the

deeply unequal valorizations and hierarchies embedded in the metaphors, and the ways that such ideas shape gender and sexual relations in a small Sunni Muslim community in Turkey.[83] If in Mexico, the active, heroic figure of the "sembrador" appears to be have coalesced as one metaphor for idealized masculinity beginning around the revolutionary period, it has its counterpart in the more passive figuration of la Adelita, a mythical figure drawn from the historical women, "las soldaderas," who served alongside soldiers during the civil war that followed the end of the Porfiriato.

Mostly, the women who participated in the post-revolutionary fighting carried supplies, cooked, and otherwise cared for the male soldiers of the rebel armies. On some occasions, however, they did fight alongside the men or they engaged in spying and other tasks seen as the more conventional duties of war. Their varied forms of participation in the fighting was always controversial, however, and in 1925, military figures turned politicians Álvaro Obregón and Venustiano Carranza created policies that attempted to ban women from battlefields in the future. In fact, the term "soldadera" may be used pejoratively, to refer not to women soldiers, but to women who accompanied the armies as sex workers. Additionally, while figures like Zapata are lionized, memorialized as revolutionary heroes and exemplary men, the participation of individual "soldaderas" has largely been lost to history.[84] Instead, they are symbolized collectively through the mythical figure of la Adelita.[85]

The story of "Adelita" first surfaced in the "corridos" during the early years of the revolution, and has been employed in literature, cinema, and other cultural productions in the many decades since. Though in some versions, Adelita is indeed a

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[83] Carol Delaney, The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
[84] Mexican author Elena Poniatowska has attempted to recuperate this history in her book Las Soldaderas (México D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1999).
[85] Some claim that "la Adelita" is based on a historical figure, but there is little evidence to confirm who she might have been if this was indeed the case.

fighter, she is also usually figured as the love interest of a male soldier, and in many versions, her active role is circumscribed by her domesticity, as Tabea Alexa Linhard explains:

> In the most popular version of the "corrido," Adelita is a domesticated "soldadera:" she is lovely yet docile, faithful and respectable but unaffected by the daily violence of the revolution….Even though, strictly speaking, Adelita's image is on the battlefields, she is still not associated with the violence, the possibilities, or the emancipatory potential of the revolution. She becomes a symbol of triumph, larger than life, revealing an all-too-common trait of female figures in revolutionary struggles, namely, that "their symbolic and iconographic presence in the imagery and images of revolutions suggest a transcendental and inspirational presence."[86]

As Linhard indicates, la Adelita is brave as well as beautiful, but in several versions of the tale, it is her memory that serves as her lover's shield when he goes into battle.[87]

Significantly, I never heard reference to la Adelita among my punk women collaborators, though occasionally, someone would refer to the participation of "las soldaderas" during the revolution as a means of citing a historical occasion of female bravery.[88] In my experience, women in the punk scene largely chose a much more diverse body of female role models. Emma Goldman is one highly regarded historical figure among Mexico City's punk women, some of whom have named their collectively run space on the campus of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México after her. Another women's collective, Las Cirujanas, included the following list of exemplary women in their organizational materials for the third annual Femstival, held in 2012:

> We identify with the transgressive discourses of diverse feminisms from local sources as well as those located elsewhere, from sentiment to thought to action. From Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Simone de Beauvoir, Emma Goldman, through the riot grrrrrls, Donna Haraway, Virgine Despentes, Guerrilla Girls, Judith

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[86] Tabea Alexa Linhard, Fearless Women in the Mexican Revolution and the Spanish Civil War (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005), 93-94. Linhard finds a similar tendency at work in imagery and tales of the Spanish "milicianas," women who fought with the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War.
[87] Ibid, 95.
[88] After my return from Mexico, however, I learned that a women's punk band called Las Adelitas, based in Portland, was preparing to tour Mexico. Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to learn what kinds of reactions their name prompted among my women punk interlocutors.

Butler, Poetas suicidas y rebeldes, up to Comandante Ester, Comandante Ramona, and all of those women who struggle to achieve their ideals.[89]

Though international in scope, the list includes some distinctive Mexican women role models, such as the Comandantes Ester and Ramona, prominent women in the EZLN, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, one of the most colorful and renowned women in Mexican cultural history. Born in the seventeenth century, she had a passion for learning from an early age and reputedly pondered dressing as a man in order to enter the university. Later, she took holy orders and was apparently prevailed upon to give up her books because the Church condemned her intellectual activities. Many people also speculate that Sor Juana was a lesbian, due to the fact that she maintained intense friendships with women and celebrated their beauty in verse. Sor Juana's problems and privileges were mostly the results of her birth into a wealthy family, something that does not seem to interfere with interest in her life among the women I knew in the punk scene.

Perhaps because of the way in which many Mexican women punks feel it necessary to look far and wide for their role models, they often seem to be more open to building and maintaining friendships with women who do not identify as punk, or even as "banda." As part of their call to "autogestión," women who participate in the punk scene frequently create events that are directed at women broadly speaking, from self-defense classes to the Femstival and beyond. Thus, while the concept of "autogestión" ostensibly always includes outreach activities, punk women's practice of it can appear more consummate. Men in the punk scene can speak to a great deal of people when their audience comprises fellow punks, but women in the scene must look outwards in order to gather a large audience, particularly if their subject matter pertains directly to women.

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[89] Las Cirujanas, "Femstival 2012: Soy mi cuerpo y mi cuerpo es un espacio turbulente," pdf file sent to me via email, March 2012.

This pragmatic approach appears to be a historical one in the context of women's participation in Mexico City's punk scene, in which women attempt to build solidarity networks both within and beyond punk social networks. Urteaga Castro-Pozo writes about the first women's collective, called CHAP'S (Chavas Activas Punks), organized from within the punk scene in 1987, detailing the hostility and rejection they experienced from male counterparts as well as their outreach towards a broader population of women.[90] The collective coalesced around other projects, including punk bands involving some of the same members, such as one called Virginidad Sacudida.[91] Urteaga Castro-Pozo writes that the women who formed part of CHAP'S had little acquaintance with feminist theory, but in the fanzine they created, as well as song lyrics written by women who also performed as musicians, they wrote about their own experiences, especially regarding sexuality and gender discrimination.[92] As musicians, the women who formed part of this network were known to favor a particularly crude and noisy style, but their broad, inclusive organization—including women from different parts of the city and even those who did not identify as "punk"—was finally what most impressed their contemporaries among "la banda punk."[93] The collective ultimately lasted only a few years, but other women's collectives sprang up periodically in the decades that followed.

In fact, during my own participation in the punk scene, it seemed that women were still more active in creating events and organizations than in performing as musicians. With such a small number of women in the punk scene, there is an even smaller percentage who participate in musical performance. Though la Zappa Punk has

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[90] Urteaga Castro-Pozo, 181-185.
[91] Ibid, 182. The translation of the band's name is "shaken virginity." La Zappa Punk was one of the founding members of the band as well as CHAP'S.
[92] Ibid. She writes, "Curiosamente, las integrantes de las CHAP'S no tenían idea del feminismo (salvo por los libros de texto) y mucho menos de sus planteamientos."
[93] Ibid, 183. Urteaga quotes a male punk scene participant.

been performing consistently since the 1980s, it is still uncommon to see individual women vocalists and instrumentalists and even rarer still to see an all-woman band. In my time among Mexico City's punk scene, I interacted with only one woman musician who performed regularly with a band—a talented, fabulous drummer who garnered a great deal of attention at shows, both for her skill and for being a rare female presence on the bandstand. Apart from la Zappa Punk and my drummer friend, I knew of only a few other women who performed regularly, some of them in styles that were more hard rock or metal than punk. During the Femstival, the organizers accordingly cast a wide net for women musicians, accepting bands from a variety of genres in addition to a good number of male performers.

Most of my involvement with women who participated in the punk scene had to do with efforts to address issues important specifically to women beyond those centered directly on musical performance. Attempting to educate their peers, and therefore to foster women's solidarity, is one method of making the punk scene a place where women can feel good about participating. A great deal of women punks' "autogestión" has to do with spreading feminist or woman-centered thought and practice, through fanzines, events, and other projects. The types of feminism that Mexico City's punk women promulgate might surprise feminists from other geographical locations and political backgrounds. Women who participate in Mexico City's punk scene tend to focus on the body and sexual freedom, over and above any interest in "women's rights" per se.[94]

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[94] A lesser interest in women's rights, in the sense of demanding equal rights from the state, seems to be based in anarchist thought. In the final chapter, I will turn to a consideration of the ways in which anarchists reject a politics of demand. In this respect punk women's feminism appears parallel to that of historical women anarchists, such as Emma Goldman. Vivian Gornick, a recent biographer, notes that Goldman rejected suffrage as an important issue for women, for example, and took little interest in opening the professions to women. Rather than a feminist, Gornick calls Goldman a "sexual radical," who made common cause with the feminists of her day only through the topic of birth control. See Vivian Gornick, Emma Goldman: Revolution as a Way of Life (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011).

My friends and interlocutors demonstrated a great deal of interest in educating women about women's health, for example. At the Chopo Market one day, a woman friend gave me a photocopied, hand-written pamphlet, a comprehensive list of contraceptives currently available and how to use them effectively. On another day, she gifted me with a larger, more elaborate handmade pamphlet on natural, plant-based gynecology. Another woman gave a class on herbology, in which participants learned to make their own natural remedies. For some women, this focus on wellness dovetails with an eco-feminist perspective. A circle of friends who participate in the punk scene were involved in several attempts to promote "green" options for menstruation over the course of my fieldwork period, between procuring hard-to-find products such as the Diva Cup to holding workshops to show women how to sew their own reusable sanitary pads.[95]

Women participants in the punk scene may also create celebratory images of women's bodies at feminist punk events. For the first Femstival, in March of 2010, a group of women bunched pink tissue paper to represent a vagina around the door to the auditorium where musical performances were held. Festival-goers were delighted by the interactive experience of climbing through it, snapping pictures and performing full-body jokes. Despite the ways in which such a representation of female anatomy might harken back to co-called "first wave" or "egalitarian" feminisms, there was also a growing interest among my punk women friends in a feminism based on the recognition of "sexual difference," the focus on the body becoming increasingly unhinged from an

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[95] The Diva Cup is a brand of menstrual cup, a washable silicone receptacle that women can wear internally to collect their menstrual fluids instead of buying disposable paper products. Since they were not sold in Mexico during my fieldwork period, women friends who participated in the punk scene used their own travel or connections in the United States to import them. In addition to re-selling them to friends (at cost), they also promoted the product in various ways, including making a Diva Cup a raffle prize at the Femstival and at other events.

essentialist understanding of the relationship between sex, gender, and sexuality.[96] In the second Femstival, in 2011, for example, the Cirjuanas collective programmed drag performances, among a myriad of other musical and cultural events.[97]

Additionally, in their everyday lives, women participants in the punk scene roundly reject a conventional "feminine" self-presentation common in mainstream Mexican society, where women are still largely expected to perform specific body grooming habits, and wear skirts and hose for work and formal occasions. Some women punks choose a heightened, provocative transgression of expectations for proper female appearance, wearing micro-miniskirts and ripped stockings and using make-up to imaginative or dramatic rather than naturalistic effect. Other women punks choose a more casual appearance, eschewing make-up, drastically cutting their hair or putting it in dreadlocks, and wearing more androgynous clothing. Most women also participate in the piercing and tattooing practices common in the punk scene, despite the fact that body art is still not as well tolerated in Mexico as it is in parts of Europe and North America, particularly for women.[98]

In addition to the ways in which their self-presentation suggests a refusal of a conventional feminine identity, women participants in Mexico City's punk scene also perform their toughness in various ways, demonstrating their equivalence to their male counterparts through their assertive and, at times, aggressive behavior. As I have indicated through my telling of encounters, I occasionally witnessed physical fighting between women who participated in the punk scene, as one example of the latter. Despite their celebration of the body and female experience, punk women in Mexico City

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[96] I employ the terms offered by Elizabeth Grosz, Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1-24.

[97] While I was not in attendance for this particular event, from what I heard from the organizers, the two performers who appeared in drag were among the foreign participants in the punk scene at the time, a Spanish woman and a North American man, a fact that is particularly interesting in light of historical attempts to categorize foreign youth in Mexico as deviant because of their sexuality or gender identification.

[98] One friend recounted, for example, that she would lose her job if she turned up for work with the tattoos on her arms exposed.

nevertheless valorize many of the same ideals that construct heroic male figures. Through their feminist non-conformity, they insist on separating qualities such as courage and independence from maleness even as they celebrate their own sexual difference.

Vehemently rejecting the "macho" as sexist and misogynist—and being quite vigilant in some cases about policing such exaggerated masculine performance—the women among Mexico City's punk scene continue to report various forms of intolerance from their male peers. While women form their own collectives from time to time, there are virtually no women in any of the major, longer-term collectives associated with the punk scene in Mexico City. I myself had very limited access to them. Additionally, punk women reported to me that at times they faced ridicule for their appearance and assertive behavior, and that men generally preferred sexual partnerships with women who presented themselves through a more conventional femininity.

The women who participate in Mexico City's punk scene for many reasons operate somewhat apart from the "macho" economy posited by Roger Lancaster. In his formulation, women are relegated to the role of intermediary as men struggle among themselves for social dominance.[99] Instead, women who participate in the punk scene often choose to do it at a greater distance than the men do, having friendship networks that reach out beyond those that shape the punk scene. Additionally, I find it significant that many of the women that I knew, who had several friends in the punk scene and participated in it regularly, nevertheless refused to label themselves as "punk."[100] While aspects of Mexico City's punk scene, such as the aesthetics of its music or its anarchist political orientation, appealed to the women who participated in

[99] Lancaster, 237. "Every act is, effectively, part of an ongoing exchange system between men in which women figure as intermediaries."
[100] In my experience, rejecting the label "punk" while participating in the punk scene was not wholly unheard of among men, but far less common.

it, their approach to fostering solidarity was markedly different, a product of both choice and necessity. Creating their own more diffuse and independent participation in the punk scene, as well as forging ties with women beyond it, women "punks" work to create an alternate economy intricately involved in, and yet separate from, that of Mexico City's punk scene at large.

5.6 Getting By, Making Good in El DeFectuoso

After the global financial crisis exploded in 2009, a common joke—if it could be called a joke for the rueful, ashen way in which people generally reiterated it—was to wonder what the big deal was. Mexico had seen virtually perpetual economic crisis since the 1970s, so what else was new? While the rest of the world wrung its hands, many of the Mexicans I knew simply sighed and shook their heads, all too familiar with what people in wealthier countries saw as a calamity of a magnitude not seen since 1929. Some punks found a silver lining in the gloom—the system was imploding, the days of capitalism's global dominance must surely be numbered.

If they await capitalism's demise, still participants in Mexico City's punk scene attempt to make interventions in their situation here and now. While working as street vendors or piecing together stints at manufacturing jobs, doing office work, studying, or for the lucky few, pursuing their careers, they also participate in the informal economy that permeates the punk scene itself. This they may accomplish by patronizing their friends' informal trade in books, recordings, and other items meant to help others further their projects of "autogestión" or by swapping goods and services among their friends. Through the hard work of screaming and other exemplary performance, punks enact the affective labor that ideally keeps these networks moving, constantly working to soothe various conflicts that threaten solidarity. While these practices help the people who

frequent the punk scene get by in Mexico City's tough economy, they also afford them some opportunity to make good on their hope for change.

6. Encounters

Beneath a surface appearance of harmony during the planning of the first Femstival in 2010, tensions had been sizzling among the women organizers. Many whispered that the feminism represented by the event was not radical enough. As evidence, they pointed to certain events included in the festival, such as the performance of a pair of women who claimed to present Hindu women's culture, gyrating in sparkly, gauzy, midriff-exposing saris. But nothing lit tensions as much as the burlesque show.

The performers had barely taken the stage before the crowd became uproarious. The women were essentially performing a striptease. A number of men in the audience approved loudly. A handful of the organizers, however, were enraged at this affront to their feminism and rushed the stage, attempting to physically remove the offending performers. While some women tried to plead for calm and tolerance, the scene erupted in chaos, the conflict overshadowing the rest of the event as well as the planning of subsequent instantiations of the Femstival.

Tired, hungry, and dehydrated after a marathon gig in an over-packed club, I walked wearily to the closest Metro station. At the base of the stairs leading to the platform, I was snapped into alertness as a small handful of police harassed three young punk kids, two boys and a girl. A policeman singled one boy out for a beating, applying his shield to the kid's ribs and kicking him. The girl clung to the boy, attempting to act both as human shield and as his inspiration to withstand the attack. Numerous pairs of eyes watched the egregious abuse of minors since we could not pass through the turnstiles to the platform.

Finally, the cop ended his assault with a shove. The kids ascended the stairs again, the boy most victimized clutching his ribs. I found them seated in the stairwell,

the two boys looking as though it cost them great effort to hold back their tears, big dark eyes wet and lips trembling. The girl was cool and collected, though, and when I asked if they were all right, she gave me a shrewd glance and leaned in towards me. But in the short span of seconds that passed as we eyed one another, in swept a group of ten to fifteen older boys. The two young ones ran to them, tripping over themselves to tell what had happened. Without breaking stride, the group charged down to the platform. Their passage was effortless.

Arriving at a show one cold February afternoon, I was taken aback by what I took to be an ominous sign—a hastily hand-lettered decree posted above the ticket window that read, "Price: $130. With discount: $130." Under the notice, four or five scowling men in red shirts marked SEGURIDAD, arms folded across their broad chests, were posted at the ticket window.

The tranquility and slight pre-show buzz were soon disrupted by the sound of shattering glass. A handful of fans had tried to "hacer la vaca" at the window and were denied admittance. Fans near the narrow entrance surrounded the guards, yelling insults, demanding free entry, and throwing objects like rocks and bottles. Just as fans began to call for a "portazo"—a storming of the doors—the police arrived. Looking frightened despite their protective gear, they were chased by more fans. The crowd was a swirl of motion, energy, and sound as those in front surged towards the door and those behind supported their efforts, yelling, cheering, and throwing things. They speedily gained entrance to the building, and calm once again reigned. We paid $30 each to get in moments later.

We were marching in the May Day parade, winding our way through the hot streets of the historic district. Due to the recent swine flu scare, the number of marchers was small, the atmosphere calm and leisurely.

Suddenly, several women I knew from the punk scene went streaming purposefully past. Looking back, I saw that they were heckling a male marcher. One of my acquaintances stopped beside me en route to join the melee and informed me that nobody could believe he would show his face at the event because he had been accused of domestic violence. She insinuated that I should join the women in harassing him, despite the fact that I had never met him or his purported victims. Instead I watched as they pushed him and yelled abuse at him, spitting at his feet, until finally, an elderly couple asked if the women would leave him be so that we could all retain our focus on the reason behind the day's gathering.

Some kind friends, people outside of the punk scene, were interested in the 2008 United States presidential elections for my sake. On election night, one, the owner of a little storefront café, asked me and another friend to watch the returns with him. Engrossed in the news reports, we let the time slip past, and paid scant attention to loud popping sounds several blocks away.

Suddenly, two young men descended into our space, each with a gun pointed at us. They shouted at us to empty our pockets and turn over all valuables. My friends lowered their eyes and did as they were told. I moved too slowly, staring at our assailants, and so they barked their orders at me again and told me to look away. My friends urged me in low voices to follow their commands.

Directly afterwards, one friend set out on foot to see if he could recover any of our undesirable things—backpacks, keys, empty wallets. No such luck. The other friend

was terribly shaken up, and after hastily locking ourselves in, we stayed a bit to comfort one another. Nobody even considered calling the police.

When he heard that the man who had recently slandered him was soon to join our party of visitors, he prepared for battle, sliding a cup down the front of his pants and pulling on some black leather gloves, the knuckles punched out to expose fist bones. At the scratch on the door, he was out of the room like a shot, angry voice escalating to a yell. Fortunately, we had come on a rather delicate mission, and no one wanted a fuss. Then too, just as he began to threaten the guy, pushing his body against his, yelling into his face, a cop car idled by. Ashen-faced, his would-be opponent gathered up what was left of his pride and retreated. Later, as we stood like sardines in a crowded Metro car, my friend grinned at me. "Who do you think would've won that one?" she asked.

It was a Sunday afternoon out in the state of Mexico, far up in the hills beyond the smoggy valley of the Federal District. Here, some friends had organized an outdoor "tocada" for an all-day, all-night, all-out finish to the weekend. It seemed like everyone spotted him at once, for all the amused whispering that suddenly commenced. He was wearing a cup outside of his pants, like another accessory to his aggressively chained, spiked, and studded outfit. It was attached to his body by a string that ran around his waist and down between his buttocks. From the back, he appeared to be sporting a thong. He wore the apparently homemade contraption with the same forbidding, humorless attitude as a peer who accessorized with a row of shiny brass knuckles.

Hopping trains is a means of travel popular among a certain "crusty" type of punk in the United States. Traveling down into Mexico, some of them continue the

practice, tucking themselves in empty cars going south, or cars full of Central American migrants moving north.

A pair of friends, one North American and one Mexican, returned to Mexico City with horrific tales after riding the rails north. As often occurs among migrants traveling by rail through Mexico, thieves boarded their car, though fortunately no one was physically harmed. Still, my Mexican friend feared for their safety and asked the North American not to reveal her nationality by speaking English for the remainder of the trip. They witnessed scenes of cruelty to migrants during a station break, and finally disembarked bewilderedly on an unscheduled stop only to find that the train had hit a man who had leapt at it in an apparent suicide attempt.

On January 9, 2011 the newspapers in the United States were full of reports about the shooting in Tucson, Arizona that had left 6 people dead and 12 wounded, including U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords and a nine year-old girl. The event sparked an outpouring of public grief as well as debate on various themes from partisanship to gun control.

On that same day, the front page of Mexico's La Jornada declared, "Organized Crime Leaves Over 50 Dead in 6 States."[1] The previous day, 56 bodies in various grisly conditions had been discovered across the country, more victims of the "drug war." The story prompted neither a rash of follow-up coverage nor editorializing.

Motivated by the scarcity of spaces in which to hold events for young people, some friends in the punk scene prepared to open a space that they called El Proyecto. In addition to putting on shows, they imagined having classes or lectures in the space,

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[1] Redacción, "Más de 50 muertos deja en seis estados el crimen organizado" La Jornada, Domingo, 9 enero 2011, 7, http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2011/01/09/, accessed 6 July, 2012.

and there were even whisperings that perhaps the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir might one day be housed in the new location if all went well. Space was rented in a centrally located part of the city, in a building that housed various types of businesses.

A couple of days after a well-attended, high-spirited opening-night party, I left Mexico for a month. By the time I returned, gossip reached my ears that the situation at El Proyecto was rapidly deteriorating. There had been complaints by fellow tenants about how the building was being disrespected, as visitors roamed the hallways, spitting and relieving themselves where they would. There was apparently an incident of petty theft. Finally, a particularly ugly brawl occurred in the street just outside the building one night among the audience for a show. El Proyecto closed its doors soon after.

"Do you remember?" my friend asked. She gestured to a pile of fanzines she was working on, a transnational, bilingual project of commemoration, education, and catharsis, a group effort to come to terms with the gruesome rape and murder of Marcella "Sali" Grace Eiler in Oaxaca in fall 2008.

I did indeed, more than I could communicate in that moment, and so I simply nodded. Sali was a brave and capable young woman from Oregon, fiercely independent yet much beloved in various social circles in both the US and Mexico that she frequented while pursuing her interests in animal welfare, social justice, the arts, and the environment. Traveling to Oaxaca to organize some arts events, she disappeared. Her badly mutilated corpse was soon found in a remote cabin.

Local authorities and media did little to no investigation. Instead, Sali's circle of friends pieced together the trajectory of what had occurred on the night of her rape-murder, determined on a suspect, and got law enforcement to help them detain him when he returned to Mexico City. He confessed, both to the people who initially detained him, and then to police. Later, he claimed to have been coerced into confessing

through his captors' physical assault, and accused Sali of heavy drug use and promiscuity, unsubstantiated claims that were printed in many news stories about the crime.

Gatillazo, a band that draws on the legacy of the enormously popular Spanish punk band La Polla (Records), was coming to perform in Mexico. They refused to play in Mexico City, however, because of the notorious reputation of its punk scene. So, several busloads of fans made the six-hour trip out to Guadalajara to see the legendary performers, spending several hundred pesos on travel. Before the gig, police detained a number of fans, many of whom had tickets to the event and so posed no risk of attempting to stage a "portazo."

Nevertheless, there was a "portazo" finally, after a few aborted attempts and after the ticket price was lowered at least once. The police detained still more people. Of an audience of hundreds, ten to fifteen people crashed the gates. Later, others looted a bar at the edge of the space, to the glee of the crowd. Fans passed around the free beer, tossing empties into the crowd or at the stage. One guy contributed to the pandemonium by screaming out repeatedly, "Odio! Odio!" ("Hatred!"). The ground underfoot was a carpet of broken glass by the time Gatillazo finally took the stage. A friend remarked to me that it had been a fairly tranquil event and that it would have been much worse in Mexico City. This was said with more than a hint of pride.

Among "la banda," there was a great deal of discussion about a perceived rise of fascism in Mexico, from the political dealings of the right-wing Partido de Acción Nacional to gangs of street toughs labeled "Nazis." One Saturday, I set out to witness a hastily organized march against fascism that was set to take place from the Monumento a la Revolución to the nearby Chopo market.

It was a small crowd mingling under the massive monument, and it accreted few people as we walked down broad avenues lined with palms. It wasn't long, however, before two busloads of "granaderos" began to hover alongside us. Hanging towards the back of the marchers, where government stooges are always rumored to be planted, I saw a few masked men begin to hurl rocks at the windows of the storefronts we passed. Heavily armed and also masked, the "granaderos" descended from their buses and began to menace the small group of demonstrators.

Unusually, I was invited to a party in someone's home after a gig far out in the metropolitan zone. It was a low-key affair, people hanging out, listening to some music and drinking into the wee small hours. At around 5:00 a.m., I narrowly avoided an argument with my host. Exhausted and annoyed, I retired to a chair to sleep for a bit as many others were starting to do. I planned to head for the Metro when it opened at 7:00.

Those who were still awake at that hour urged me not to go, for the day too would be spent partying. My host knew that I was leaving not just because of fatigue, but also because of my irritation with him. He blocked my path to the door, and claimed that I could not go because there were gangs in the neighborhood. The tense exchange erupted into an argument as I insisted, and he began to grab at me in his efforts to detain me. Furious, I threw my arms at his belly, attempting to shove him away. Our eyes met in mutual astonishment. Taking advantage of that split-second pause, I gained the street, where children were toying with a soccer ball as vendors set up their "puestos" for the day.

It was time for me to leave Mexico. Fortunately, at a small factory just a few steps from my apartment building, they sold large cardboard boxes. Usually when I

walked past the workshop, as I did multiple times on most days, the men were very obvious about ignoring me, shifting their gaze to the far horizon. But as I rifled through their inventory, one worker began to chat. He said he'd once seen me in the airport, maybe a year before. Why hadn't he said hello? I asked, looking for clues to the weird, ghostlike status I still had with many in the neighborhood. Despite the fact that I had lived there for more than two years, few people greeted or otherwise acknowledged me on the street. This man's response: he thought it would seem suspicious, approaching a foreign woman traveling alone in Mexico. Maybe I would think he was out to kidnap me. He kept his distance so as not to frighten me.

7. Violence

The global media has focused a great deal of attention on Mexico in recent years, documenting the gruesome results of President Felipe Calderón's much-hyped plan to perpetrate a "war on drugs" against the cartels trafficking narcotics through Mexico to the strong, ceaseless demand of people in the United States. From the ever-rising body count, including many innocent people caught in the crossfire—with more than 50,000 known dead at the time of this writing—to accounts of beatings and murders of journalists and human rights workers in various regions of the country, news from Mexico is frequently accompanied by appalling images and headlines.[1]

In addition to media portrayals of violence in Mexico, the United States government advises its citizens to "defer non-essential travel" to 18 of the country's 31 states, with the further admonishment that caution be exercised throughout the republic, as violence can occur anywhere.[2] Citing the tactics of "transnational criminal organizations" in particular, the State Department advises travelers to be on their guard against "homicide, gun battles, kidnapping, car-jacking, and highway robbery," noting also an alarming increase in "disappearances" in recent years.[3] Popular travel guides like Let's Go and Lonely Planet attempt to put such warnings into concrete terms, advising travelers not to flag taxis off of city streets and to avoid non-toll roads, among other safety tips.

Mexico City itself has long had a reputation for high levels of violent crime, and towards the beginning of my stay in 2008, I heard a number of recommendations from local friends about how to protect myself while in the city—everything from how to

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[1] Major global news outlets report that the body count has reached approximately 50,000 at the time of this writing in late 2012.
[2] "Travel Warning: U.S. Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs: Mexico, February 8, 2012" on the U.S. Department of State website, http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_5665.html, accessed 23 July, 2012.
[3] Ibid.

avoid being robbed on the Metro to what neighborhoods to avoid by day or night. As time passed, I heard less complaint about the city and its troubles with crime, however. While I had become a more seasoned city denizen, I also put this down to the fact that the Federal District and its environs were becoming known as havens away from drug-related violence. Though there were a handful of horrific incidents tied to narco-trafficking during my long stay in the city, we experienced nothing like the repeat trauma endured by Mexicans in areas plagued by heightened levels of violence attributed to the cartels and governmental "drug war" force.[4] This is not to say that *chilangos* were immune to the terror prompted by extreme acts of violence making headlines across the country, nor to the everyday violence of city life.

In a context in which it was difficult to avoid bombardment with images and anecdotes of extreme violence, it was a strange and sometimes jarring experience to spend time with a group of mostly young people whose forms of sociability have been associated with violence over the course of several decades. Mexico City's punks have long had a fearsome reputation for being a destructive lot, prone to fighting to get what they want, and often drunken and disorderly besides. Local media representations and some sociological reports of them frequently describe a monolithic punk culture in the city and metropolitan zone as a wild, ungovernable force fueled by the impotent rage of a lumpen proletarian class.[5]

In one instance, the global media got hold of a story that punk youth in Mexico City and elsewhere were targeting "emo" kids, whom they believed to be gay, for

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[4] For an account of the "war on drugs" and its impact on various Mexican communities, see John Gibler, To Die In Mexico: Dispatches from Inside the Drug War (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2011).
[5] See for example, Esquizofrenia, Ecatepec: El Microclima del Punk, Canal 22, Mexico, D.F., originally broadcast 2010, accessed online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHefH4vUE0E, 12.4.12.

harassment and physical aggression.[6] From various on-the-ground accounts, it seemed that these confrontations were actually perpetrated by a range of young men, not simply those who identified themselves as punk.[7] On October 3, 2009, a friend and I sought out newspapers after protest marches we'd attended the day before, in commemoration of the student massacre on October 2, 1968. There had been hundreds of demonstrators, a few episodes of vandalism, and a small group of protestors who attacked the riot police surrounding government buildings in the Zócalo as well-heeled employees watched from the balconies, seemingly in a festive mood. Along the march route, the riot police had deployed huge numbers of personnel, detaining and threatening protestors and firing tear gas into the crowd. The next morning, we found headlines that read "Anarcofuriosos!" and "Anarcopunks dominate the march" with huge pictures of masked protestors hurling stones and attacking police."[8]

The juxtaposition of the types of violence with which punks in Mexico City may be associated and the kinds of violence that more regularly occupy national and international discourse thus calls out for examination. Are "violent" encounters among people who frequent the punk scene to be found along a "continuum of violence" as Philippe Bourgois posits in his essay on the links between structural, symbolic, political, and everyday violence?[9] Learning from the experience of violence in the context of two very different field sites—among guerrilla fighters in El Salvador in the 1980s and crack dealers in 1990s Harlem—Bourgois concludes that it is the ethnographer's task to map

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[6] For example, Chris Hawley, "Subculture Clash Among Mexico Youth," in USA Today, 18 April 2008, accessed online at http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-04-14-emo_N.htm, 4 December, 2012.
[7] In addition to accounts I heard frommy own interlocutors, see also Daniel Hernandez, "Violence Against Emos Sweeps Across Mexico," Intersections, blogpost 22 March, 2008, http://danielhernandez.typepad.com/daniel_hernandez/2008/03/violence-agains.html, accessed 4 December, 2012. This is one in a series of posts Hernandez did on punk-emo conflict in Mexico.
[8] See Karenina Piña and Francisco Reséndiz, "Anarcofuriosos: Vándalos Cortan Marcha" in El Grafico, 3 October, 2009, 4 and Staff writer, "Recuerdan: Dominan Anarcopunks Marcha 2 de Octubre" in Metro, 3 October, 2009, 4.
[9] Philippe Bourgois, "The Continuum of Violence in War and Peace: Post-Cold War Lessons from El Salvador" in Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology, ed. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 425-434.

the connections between these several types of violence, identified by scholars in various disciplines over the course of several decades:[10]

> The challenge of ethnography, then, is to check the impulse to sanitize, and instead to clarify the chains of causality that link structural, political, and symbolic violence in the production of an everyday violence that buttresses unequal power relations and distorts attempts at resistance.[11]

Certainly, the fact that Mexico has drawn attention on the world stage for the violence of its "war on drugs," in addition to its poor human rights record and vastly unequal wealth distribution, suggests that violent practices in the everyday lives of Mexican citizens are intimately connected to these circumstances. How, then, might webs of causality be drawn between such factors as structural, political, and symbolic violence and the everyday manifestations of violence among a specific group of Mexico City's youth?

In addition to the challenge that Bourgois presents to ethnographers, anthropologists writing on violence, like Neil Whitehead, have recently promoted a focus on its poetics. Understanding violence not as a temporary rupture in an ordered cultural system, but as a form of expression that is of a piece with its cultural and historical context, these scholars analyze violent practices, noting how they are drawn from a shared repertoire of meaning, and thus are highly meaningful in and of themselves, precisely because of the disturbing ways in which they may signify.

> …the phrase "meaningless violence" comes readily to mind as we contemplate the mass civilian deaths of 9/11, the rocket attacks on Palestinian civilians, the suicide bombings of cafes and family parties in Israel, the chopping of Tutsi children and babies, the kneecapping of Irish teenagers, the mutilation of hands and legs of Liberian noncombatants, the execution with hammers of Bosnian Muslims, and so forth. However, such cultural forms of violence are in fact deeply meaningful, recalling the histories that shore up the conflicts in which antagonists are engaged and forcing the nightmares of the past into the waking realities of the present. Our moral rectitude in condemnation of such acts cannot

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[10] Ibid, 426.
[11] Ibid, 433.

> stand in for the professional commitment to understanding all human behavior, no matter how challenging and repulsive to our personal sensibilities.[12]

In compiling a list of violent practices, Whitehead chooses extreme acts that may easily be understood as enmeshed in intensely conflictive struggles, tying together political and cultural realms—suicide bombings, torture, genocidal murders of civilian populations. Though he notes that analyzing a poetics of violence is also useful in writing about Amazonian "kanaimà" shamanic practices, which involve ritual mutilation of victim's bodies, the majority of the essays in the volume conform to a focus on practices that take place in what may more easily be understood as political arenas, readily tied to war and other extreme forms of conflict.

Analyzing a poetics of violent practices and performances in Mexico City's punk scene, however, must involve careful consideration of the ways in which both musical and other social performance may be simultaneously presentational and representational, occurring in an artistic as well as a political and cultural context.[13] Describing punk as a lifestyle choice, many of my interlocutors drew attention to a blurring of performance and ordinary life experience that they defined as key to participation in the punk scene. Kristine Stiles writes about a similar dynamic as she theorizes performance in the context of performance art, noting that performance artists play with the boundaries of art and the everyday. The literal presence of the artist's body in the context of the performance invites viewers to recognize the artist as both subject and object, as the creating artist subject and as the tool of her own creation.

> Performance operates through presentation and representation, and therefore may be understood as an aesthetic discourse on what it means "to be." In

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[12] Neil Whitehead, "Introduction: Cultures, Conflicts and the Poetics of Violent Practice" in Violence, ed. Neil Whitehead (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2004), 10.

[13] I group musical performance together with social performance in an attempt to emphasize that music is itself socially constituted, in its production and interpretation. I therefore differentiate musical performance from other forms of social performance only through the desire to highlight its musical content.

performance, artists present and represent themselves in the process of being and doing, and these acts take place in a cultural context for a public to witness.[14]

In the context of Mexico City's punk scene, punk performers play with a similar dualism. Though performance artists place themselves as artists, locating their actions as part of their own everyday experience while also framing such performance as art, punks eschew the notion that they create art at all. Instead of using performance to engage in ontological arguments about what art is, punks refuse the very notion of art itself, identifying it as a bourgeois pursuit, as well as one that promotes hierarchies between artists and non-artists. Punks prefer to place all of their actions in the context of the everyday, including those performances that might ordinarily be understood as art because of conventional framing devices, such as live, on-stage performance.[15]

Despite the ways in which their intentions differ from performance artists', I argue that punks operate through a tension between presentation and representation, similar to the one that Stiles identifies. In Mexico City's punk scene, musical performance is one of an array of social performances that constitute punk subjects as such, while also providing models of ethical exemplarity. Through musical and other social performance, I contend, punks seek to present themselves as ethical subjects in the context of the everyday, but they do so in part through tropes of artistic performance, through which they represent ideal methods for achieving such exemplarity. Mexico City's punks present themselves as natural, ethical subjects, but that very subjectivity is formed in part through participation in the representational practices of punk performance.

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[14] Kristine Stiles, "Performance" in Critical Terms for Art History, second edition, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Schiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 75-97.
[15] In the context of musical performance, however, punks try to mitigate the effects of such devices, perhaps by passing the microphone to audience members or by using performance spaces that do not have an elevated stage area to separate the band from the crowd. Many of punks' musical choices also serve to deny the artistry of their musical performance, valuing simplicity and accessibility above traditional signs of technical prowess or artistic intent.

Following the indications of my collaborators, I therefore cast a wide net when choosing the types of performance to analyze, recognizing the equivalence posited by punks between specifically musical and extra-musical social performances that occur in a scene defined largely by musical practice and preference. Nevertheless, I remain alert to the entanglements of punk performance with the representational aspects of artistic performance that Stiles indicates. I wonder how violence is not only lived by punk subjects, but how they represent it in performance. Highlighting the meaningful equivalence between musical and other social performances, as well as their double re/presentational nature, I seek to clarify the relationship between art, the everyday, and the political in pursuing a poetics of violence in Mexico City's punk scene.

7.1 Amor y Rabia

In any analysis of violence in the context of punk performance, I bear in mind Neil Whitehead's reminder that the term "violence," though often used to describe physical actions, more properly refers to the quality of actions than their type.

> The notion of violence etymologically alludes to the qualities of human actions not to their behavioral forms, expressing a vehemence or intensity that is in some way excessive or extreme. The notion of violence as vehemence allows us to do justice to the gradation in violent acts—say from the violence of verbal or gestural expression through to the violence of armed bodily assault…This is not to suggest that all violence must be accompanied by any particular emotive state—for that is not what defines the violent…Although there is also a lexical bias toward understanding violence as primarily physical and bodily, violence as vehemence is present in many other forms of experience.[16]

Viewing violence as vehemence makes sense in the context of Mexico City's punk scene, in which punk shows, which encompass various musical and social practices, are described as events at which participants generate intense feeling and energy. Indeed,

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[16] Neil L. Whitehead, "On the Poetics of Violence" in Violence, ed. Neil L. Whitehead (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2004), 61-62.

while the show is often referred to as an opportunity for letting out one's rage, an occasion in which a person can "sacar la rabia," specific practices like the slam dance are most frequently denoted by reference to their intensity rather than through the valence of any particular emotion.[17] Rage is valued as a particularly vehement state of being, not infrequently paired with other intense emotions. The phrase "amor y rabia," for example, used as a form of greeting or as a slogan, pairs love and rage in order to evoke the intensity with which punks ideally feel their commitments to one another, to their participation in the punk scene, and to their beliefs. While the small number of women participants in the scene engage in sustained discourse about gender and sexuality, the concept of love is aired more frequently through the notion of solidarity, through the love and companionship that ideally binds a community in struggle, in "la lucha."

In accounting for the positive valuation of vehement feeling in the context of Mexico City's punk scene, it also helps to consider the relation between emotion and affect. Since the mid-1970s, scholars in disciplines from experimental psychology to anthropology have taken an interest in the study of feeling states, leading to what some term a "revolution" in the understanding of emotion.[18] Exploring fundamental questions such as whether emotion is an innate human characteristic with specific emotions found universally across cultures, scholars have also questioned the predominant James-Lange theory of emotion, developed simultaneously in the late 19th century by William James in the United States and C.G. Lange in Europe. Conceptualized through hydraulic metaphors, the Jamesian theory imagines emotion as a force circulating within the body

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[17] The most common way in which members of the punk scene described the slam dance in my hearing was to call it a "dance of energy."
[18] William Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), ix.

and potentially spilling over, particularly in the case of intense emotions such as anger.[19] As Robert Solomon notes in his essay on the inadequacy of the Jamesian theory to account for "anger" cross-culturally, some cultures embrace a hydraulic understanding of emotion, and some do not. Norms for the expression of emotions that appear to approximate what Western observers understand as anger differ markedly. Beyond wondering whether the Tahitian word "riri" truly approximates "anger," for example, Solomon also cites work on cultures such as the Utka people, whom anthropologist Jean Briggs claimed did not actually feel anger as North Americans might understand it.[20] Solomon extrapolates from his survey of anthropological literature on "anger" the idea that cultures that pay greater attention to intense emotional states may be more likely to embrace a Jamesian view of emotion.

> A culture that emphasizes what David Hume called "the violent passions" will be ripe for the Jamesian theory, but a culture that stresses the "calm" emotions (an appreciation of beauty, lifelong friendship, a sense of beneficence and justice) will find the Jamesian theory and the hydraulic model that underlies it patently absurd.[21]

In part because the James-Lange theory appears not to be broadly applicable, Solomon ultimately concludes that it should be jettisoned in future studies of emotion.

In addition to voicing similar doubts about prominent theories and methods of studying emotion, scholars like Margaret Wetherell have also pointed to the inadequacy of most emotions research to account for more complex emotional states (beyond the "basic emotions" identified in psychological research), or for more transpersonal experiences of feeling.

> Ordinary 'basic emotion' terms used by psychobiologists (sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust and happiness) do not adequately describe the range and variety of affective performances, affective scenes and affective events.[22]

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[19] Robert C. Solomon, "Getting Angry: the Jamesian Theory of Emotion in Anthropology" in The Emotions: A Cultural Reader, ed. Helena Wulff (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 197-204.
[20] Jean Briggs, Never in Anger: Portrait of an Eskimo Family (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).
[21] Solomon, 201.
[22] Margaret Wetherell, Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding (London: Sage, 2012), 3.

Wetherell gives three examples of the types of elusive affective scenes and performances she has in mind, citing the historical puzzle of the "dancing plague" that spread throughout Strasbourg in 1518, the strikingly similar arguments and tropes presented by white middle- and working-class English interview subjects in a contemporary sociological study, and the case study of a patient in psychotherapy who developed what his therapist called a "body story line" to describe his practice of subtly, though purposefully bumping up against other commuters during his journeys back and forth to work.[23] In each case, bodily or feeling states appear to dominate a person or a community of persons in ways that evade explanation through reference to any clear emotional experience. Instead, such events appear to be driven by affect, understood as "influence, intensity and impact," theorized through a broader philosophical trajectory privileging process and becoming over more static states of being, from Latour's Actor-Network Theory to Foucault's work on power to the assemblages of Deleuze and Guattari.[24]

In addition to the ways in which affect theories engage with more subtle, complex feeling states not easily described by "basic emotion" terms, they also attempt to account for the role of the body in affective experience that does not necessarily embrace traditional Western notions of a mind-body split, or of an "inner life" separate from community life, for example. Some commentators have argued, however, that modern-day affect studies may unwittingly fall back on "social contagion" or suggestibility models dating to turn-of-the-20th-century crowd psychology and mid-century sociology to explain the workings of affect, particularly with regard to the transmission of affect between individuals.[25] Wetherell calls this tendency a "celebration of the uncanny."[26]

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[23] Ibid, 5-9.
[24] Ibid, 3-13.
[25] Lisa Blackman, "Is Happiness Contagious?" in New Formations, vol. 63 (2007/2008), 15-31.
[26] Wetherell, 21.

She advises scholars to focus on "affective practice" as an antidote to "spooky suggestion," claiming that the term offers the following promise:

> [Affective] practice certainly pushes more towards habit than the uncanny, but it is elastic enough to guide thinking about the patterning of extraordinary, spontaneous and one-off affective activities. Sometimes affect starts from scratch, and sometimes, as Lauren Berlant (2008a) points out, we are very obviously engaged in a process of "emotional quotation" or "affective citation," endlessly plagiarising our own and others' past practice.[27]

In the context of Mexico City's punk scene, I find the concept of affective practice useful for discussing repeated actions such as the slam dance and the "portazo," as well as the choice of favored aesthetic elements in the construction of more colloquial musical and social performances, like the use of growled vocal timbres or collage techniques. Seeing such actions and events as affective practices encourages an understanding of the ways in which a preference for intense affective experience may shape individual and collective choices about the creation of diverse performances, from the aesthetic to the interpersonal. Due to punks' own recourse to emotions terminology in describing some experience, however, I will also continue to engage with emotions terminology in cases where it appears in punk discourse. Looking at the notion of "rabia" within the scene and its enactment in supposedly cathartic communal actions, as well as its pairing with other intense affective states such as "amor," I attempt to account for the positive valorization of rage while also placing it in a broader affective context of an affinity for vehemence, which plays a role in Mexico City's punks' image (and sometimes self-image) as violent individuals.

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[27] Ibid, 23.

7.2 Sonic Vehemence: Speed, Volume, Noise

Certainly, Mexico City's punks' affinity for vehemence may be heard in their musical preferences and in the musical and social performances through which they respond to the music.

In addition to the vehement sounds of punk, extreme metal subgenres have long played a role in shaping the punk that musicians in Mexico City's scene produce.[28] In fact, music historian Steve Waksman demonstrates the ways in which punk and metal have been knit together since the beginning of their respective histories in the 1970s. Though he does not deny that metal and punk have sometimes been understood as oppositional musical forms with oppositional fan bases, he considers that metal and punk ultimately exist along a continuum that flowed from a unified source: rock music.[29] The convergence between metal and punk became more pronounced as time went on, resulting in the crossover popularity of New Wave of British Heavy Metal bands like Motörhead in the late 1970s, and the intersecting development of hardcore punk and speed and thrash metal in the 1980s.

Waksman underscores the importance of fast tempos to all of these sub-genres, seeing it as part of an on-going discourse about virtuosity as well as an inducement to heightened musical experience. In metal scenes, fans embraced virtuosic performance, including the explicit appropriation of technically challenging classical music repertory like the Kreutzer violin etudes as material for dizzyingly fast, showy guitar solos, a practice that came to be known as "shredding." Punks, however, rejected such display,

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[28] Metal in its various forms is in fact popular among Mexican rock music fans, broadly speaking. Iconic, prolific bands like Metallica have done successful tours in Mexico in recent years, for example, as have bands like The Scorpions, who tour more on the strength of nostalgia than of recent creative effort. Some of my friends from the local punk scene squelched their bias against big, corporate-sponsored rock festivals to see Brazilian metal band Sepultura perform at the Viva Latina festival in 2011. I once sat outside of the Circo Volador youth center with huge crowds of punk fans one evening as we waited, hoping (in vain) to see another of Brazil's metal bands, Ratos de Parão, at a reduced admissions price.

[29] Steve Waksman, This Ain't the Summer of Love: Conflict and Crossover in Heavy Metal and Punk (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 7-18.

linking virtuosity to a hierarchical star system of musicians, and another hierarchy among musicians and non-musicians, the betrayal of rock music's seeming collectivist promise. Waksman terms the paring down of rock music to the structural simplicity of hardcore punk a "purification," concluding that "the very restrictions embedded in the hardcore aesthetic are what gave the music much of its power."[30]

> The quickened pace of hardcore was the musical analogue of, even the precondition for, the physical intensity of slam-dancing: it was attached to the hardcore strategy to reduce rock to certain core elements, and it was a means of demonstrating the hardcore commitment to an extreme sound and style of performance.[31]

In addition to the "head-banging" style of musical response for which they were known, metal audiences eventually appropriated the slam dance. Over time, a discourse of rage also emerged in both scenes to account for the intense energy and aggression of these and other interactions with the music.

Both punk and metal musicians continued to experiment with speed as time passed, mashing together sections of a song played at vastly different tempos to produce what Metallica scholar Glenn Pillsbury calls "cycles of energy," or abandoning speed all together in favor of a slow, "sludgy" pace.[32] Mexico City punk band Kagada de Perro makes use of such play with tempo in a song titled "Antisocial." Lasting roughly three minutes, it incorporates cycles of energy, with various sections at different speeds.

The song begins in a slow four-four meter, as the guitar roils through a six-bar cycle of eighth notes—three bars of the tonic chord, one predominant, one dominant, tonic—with the eighth notes slurred across the bar line. The drummer emphasizes the

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[30] Waksman, This Ain't the Summer of Love, 264-266.
[31] Ibid, 258-259.
[32] Ibid, 345, note 46. Waksman cites Glenn Pillsbury, author of a monograph on Metallica for his creation of the term "cycles of energy." Pillsbury explains: "Ultimately, rhythmic intensities do not signify nearly as strongly by themselves. Rather, the changes in intensity provide the crucial context for their signification, and the various contexts then create the cycles of energy that make thrash metal songs so effective."

common time feel, lightly marking the upbeats and pounding the downbeats of eighth notes that mirror the guitar part. Employing a false cord technique, the vocalist rasps his lines. Suddenly, roughly a minute into the song, there is a second's worth of silence, and the bass steps forward with some low trembling. The long introduction is over. The vocalist breaks into a scream, cuing the band to switch to a faster, duple meter with the guitar hovering closely over the tonic chord as the mood of the song intensifies.

About twenty seconds into the verse, there is another abrupt change—a brief 7-second interlude, as the vocalist insists repeatedly, "Soy antisocial!" ("I'm antisocial!") The band then returns to the sound they had created at the beginning of the verse. At about 2:13, they replay the interlude, but as they merge back into the verse once again, they speed up the tempo one last time, playing it through much more quickly than before. With its stripped down instrumental parts and simple harmony, in addition to the cycles of energy the band employs, the song recalls classic hardcore punk. The play with slower tempos, however, and the deep, growling vocal timbre are elements that indicate that Kagada de Perro, along with many of their friends and colleagues in Mexico City's punk scene, are metal fans too. Dancers at the "tocadas" often react to songs that are structured through cycles of energy, like "Antisocial," by moving in a more languid manner to the slower sections and then becoming frenetically active in the up-tempo sections.

In addition to vehement responses to fast tempos and cycles of energy, other musical elements in both punk and metal that contribute to an intense physical and affective response from fans are the use of distortion and high volume. Waksman notes the creative frustrations that hardcore punk musicians began to feel in the mid-1980s, as they chafed at the limitations of their musical "purity." With his history based in North American punk and metal scenes, he chooses Black Flag's 1983 release, My War, as a point of departure that marked some of the ways in which the aesthetics of punk began

to shift. In addition to a signature use of feedback in the Black Flag album, Waksman points to its exploration of the concept of musical "heaviness:"

> Here was the aesthetic crux of the matter: while punk typically shared with heavy metal a taste for distortion, the quickened tempos of hardcore obliterated some of the sonic qualities that had marked the heavy music of an earlier era. Hardcore was treble, not bass; drum patterns tended to highlight the piercing sound of the snare rather than the throb of the kick drum; even the bass parts in hardcore were often played farther up on the neck than was customary in other rock styles and were geared toward mobility rather than laying a solid, bottom-heavy foundation. Ginn [Black Flag's guitarist] and his cohorts turned to the music of Black Sabbath and others to reorient their sound to a low-end sort of heaviness that punk had largely forsaken.[33]

Music scholars Cornelia Fales and Harris Berger have investigated the sonic properties of "heaviness" in an attempt to understand the acoustics that underlie this important aspect of metal fans' perception and experience. Applying their analysis specifically to guitar timbres favored by heavy metal fans, Fales and Berger discovered that not only is the distortion of a sound key to perceptions of timbral heaviness, but also where that noise falls on a frequency spectrum.[34] Music that has been described by fans as "heavier" than others actually may employ a signal placed in a more high-frequency location, leading Fales and Berger to conclude that factors other than acoustic ones color fans' understanding of "heaviness." They concur with musicologist Robert Walser, who

> …cautions researchers to avoid over-reading the iconic relationship between the distortion of the sound (increased sustain, increased spectral range) and its meanings for metalheads (power and strength). The meanings of distortion are certainly tied to this iconicity, but, as Walser correctly asserts, they are not determined by it, and distorted timbres have been given meaning in different ways at different historical moments.[35]

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[33] Ibid, 285.

[34] Cornelia Fales and Harris M. Berger, "'Heaviness' in the Perception of Heavy Metal Guitar Timbres" in Wired For Sound, ed. Paul D. Greene and Thomas Porcello (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005), 192-193. "Our search for acoustic elements in the target examples…identified the prominent noise component of the timbre to be key in provoking the sense of 'heaviness' for which the genre is named; this result is consistent with the belief of metalheads themselves that noisy textures are heavier. … Acoustic noise provokes a sensation that is called 'heaviness' by listeners, but an increase in that sensation is not simply more noise or louder noise but—perhaps more prominently—noise that is different in location relative to other elements."

[35] Fales and Berger, 194.

Certainly, a band's orientation towards punk is one factor that may shade perceptions of musical heaviness. Mexico City band Rhuckuss terms its music "metal-punk," suggesting its adherence to a crossover aesthetic that merges the sounds and meanings of metal and punk both. Rhuckuss's song "Retribución" emphasizes a particular metal-inflected heaviness of sound, a factor that emerges as equally important to the experience of listening as elements like tempo changes. In "Retribución," Rhuckuss's play with tempo is subtler, without shifts in meter. Slight changes of tempo are overshadowed by more complex rhythmic play that occurs within the larger time structure. The drummer opens the song, for example, in the common time that defines it, but unusually, measuring out two measures' worth of triplets rather than a duple rhythm.

The overall sound of the band is defined by a greater proximity of the bass and lead guitars, playing in similar registers and with high levels of distortion. And yet, in comparison to the noisy sound of Kagada de Perro, the noisy sound of Rhuckuss is richer and more resonant. The guitarists of Rhuckuss employ distortion in order to achieve a greater sustain, which infuses the musical texture with some of the iconic "power and strength" of metal, while the introduction of the crash cymbal does a great deal to emphasize a more brittle, higher-pitched noise layered on top of it.[36] Additionally, Rhuckuss's vocalist employs the more strained, screaming timbres of hardcore punk, though he doesn't reach into a particularly high, trebly vocal range. The distortion of the hoarse screaming voice and percussion is thus set against the sustained power of the guitar timbres, leading to a distinctive kind of heavy "metal-punk" sound.

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[36] Ibid. Fales and Berger note that "…distortion simulates the conversion of the guitar from an impulsive to a sustained or driven instrument, and this transformation may be part of the acoustic correlate to the perceptual experience of heaviness."

Though audiences may still dance to music like Rhuckuss's metal-punk, they are prompted less by the shifts in tempo that Kagada de Perro employs to more obvious effect. Due to the heaviness of Rhuckuss's timbral-frequency characteristics, particularly combined with high volume, the body begins to experience such powerful, noisy-yet-sustained sound as a physical force in the performance space. The experience of this kind of visceral heaviness seems to move the body from within, equivalent to extreme sonic experience in other contexts. For example, Tomie Hahn describes the effects of deep, loud sound in the context of a Monster Truck rally:

> The status of these rallies as extreme is sensually very real and evident: the trucks appropriate space with their sound….the extreme sensory experience surpasses sound. … The body rumbles from within as the trucks pass by. Even though they may be running some distance from the bleachers, the trucks touch and shake the audience with their vibrations.[37]

Though both bands enjoy the "sonic vehemence" of speed and noise, their musical preferences and their manner of using them nevertheless differ markedly. But if the music of Kagada de Perro seems to move the body differently, its erratic tempo changes causing fans to feel shifts in energy while the heaviness of Rhuckuss impacts the body through a more visceral sound, both bands also rely on high volume for their physical impact. Their extremely loud performances can be physically painful to the ears, though few audience members I knew in Mexico City's punk scene chose to wear earplugs. (Many people suffered noticeable hearing loss at an early age for this very reason.) To dampen the sound for the ears' protection would be to muffle its physical power, and most fans welcomed the extremity of high volume for its aural as well as visceral impact. In Mexico City's punk scene, extreme sonorities are explored and exploited precisely for the ways in which they vehemently impact bodies and their feeling states.

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[37] Tomie Hahn, "'It's the RUSH': Sites of the Sensually Extreme" in TDR: The Drama Review, vol. 50, no. 2 (Summer, 2006), 7.

7.3 Affective Overdrive

In order to describe Mexico City's punks' relationship with their music and other vehement performance, I appropriate a term used in recent scholarship on the global metal underground: "affective overdrive." This is how a handful of scholars have taken to referring to the intensity with which fans of heavy metal perform and appreciate the sonic vehemence of their music.[38] Though the term is undoubtedly meant to recall the practice of electronically overdriving instruments in order to create distortion, authors often skip over the musical factors that might contribute to intense affective experience and proceed directly to the attempt to account for its individual and collective meaning. Meanwhile, they distance metal from punk, despite acknowledging their intertwined histories, similar aesthetics and performance practices, and the fact that a good number of metal fans are also punk fans, and vice versa.[39] Here, the authors explain the importance of separating metal from punk in the project of presenting their concept of affective overdrive:

> With its transgressive songtexts, rough vocal timbres, and aggressive style, hardcore punk was something that metalheads could not dismiss as auditory pabulum. However, metalheads felt that the emotional intensity of hardcore was too frequently linked to explicit political ideologies. …metalheads felt that…most punk music shared a tendency toward preachy, dogmatic songtexts and the punks themselves had an intolerant attitude toward the views of others. In contrast, the metalheads claimed that extreme metal was more individualistic and emphasized tolerance, personal responsibility, and individual choice.[40]

The term "affective overdrive" is nevertheless a fantastic term to account for the ways in which musicians and fans interact with punk music as well.[41] At various points

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[38] Jeremy Wallach, Harris M. Berger, and Paul D. Greene, "Affective Overdrive, Scene Dynamics, and Identity in the Global Metal Scene" in Metal Rules the Globe: Heavy Metal Music Around the World, ed. Wallach, Berger, and Greene (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 13.
[39] See for example, Wallach, Berger, and Greene and also Harris M. Berger, Metal, Rock, and Jazz: Perception and the Phenomenology of Musical Experience (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1999), 261-275.
[40] Wallach, Berger, and Greene, 14.
[41] David Novak's work on distortion, sensory overload, and the development of experimental listening practices among Japanese Noise fans is another important contribution to a nascent discourse on "extreme" sound. See for example Novak, "2.5 by 6 Meters of Space: Japanese Music Coffeehouses and Experimental Practices of Listening in Popular Music, vol. 27, no. 1 (January, 2008), 15-34.

in their texts, the authors reveal that "metalheads" refer to an experience of rage when they discuss their participation in their scene's musical practices.[42] In Mexico City's punk scene, the affective overdrive that audiences demonstrate—their mingled experience of rage, intense energy, and the "love" of solidarity—are born of exactly the kind of mixture of extreme sound and extreme affective impact, prompted by lyrics on political and social themes, that Wallach, Berger, and Green posit. In trying to distinguish the use that "metalheads" make of their rage as being very different from the rage of punk, the authors illuminate a discourse that is in fact reproduced in Mexico City's punk scene itself. While rage is prized as an element of affective overdrive, audiences differ as to how the affective overdrive produced through intense musical experience should be spent. Indeed, while bands like Rhuckuss and Kagada de Perro operate within the same scene, sometimes sharing the bill at gigs, they participate in very different networks that form it, performing their affective overdrive in ways that tend to endear them to different sub-groups of that scene.[43]

The experience of affective overdrive thus informs the accumulation and use of affective capital. I derive the term "affective capital" from the concept of "emotional capital," coined in the early 1980s by feminist scholar Helen Nowotny, who sought to describe the ways in which women operated in the private sphere.

> Emotional capital is generally confined within the bounds of affective relationships of family and friends and encompasses the emotional resources you hand on to those you care about. According to Nowotny, emotional capital constitutes: "knowledge, contacts and relations as well as access to emotionally valued skills and assets, which hold within any social network characterized at least partly by affective ties."[44]

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[42] See Berger, Metal, Rock, and Jazz. Berger also claims that the "rage" that metal fans mention is actually leavened with a number of calmer emotions, such as sadness.
[43] Kagada de Perro and Rhuckuss appeared together with veteran Mexico City bands Coprofilia and Constructores del Odio for Tijuana band Coacción, September 29, 2012 at the Mutliforo Clandestino, a punk performance space in Ecatepec.
[44] Diane Reay, "Gendering Bourdieu's concept of capitals? Emotional capital, women and social class" in Feminism After Bourdieu, ed. Lisa Adkins and Beverly Skeggs (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 60.

Nowotny further characterized emotional capital as explicitly gendered, unlike other forms of capital drawn from the work of Bourdieu, from cultural to social to symbolic capital. While seeing emotional capital as a resource that women had in greater abundance than men, Nowotny did not define it as an inherently positive resource. In fact, she emphasized that it was a form of capital that women developed in response to social circumstances that limit their possibilities of full participation in the public sphere.[45]

Despite operating in a scene that is implicitly gendered male, Mexico City's punks seem to deploy something like Nowotny's emotional capital in the maintenance of their social networks. Also limited in the extent of their participation in the public sphere through economic marginalization and other factors like education and class, participants in the punk scene tighten their social bonds through demonstrating the "love" and "rage" that ideally unite them. I prefer the term "affective capital" to "emotional capital," however, because even though Mexico City's punks speak in emotions terms, there is great emphasis placed on their ability to affect others, to stimulate others' feelings of solidarity, anger, and exclusion through musical and social performances.

It is not enough, therefore, for members of the punk scene to simply demonstrate their rage. It matters how they demonstrate it, and how their performances impact their relationships with others. The particular status of the performer also matters, as Wetherell noted:

> …emotional capital is not defined by the affect itself and its routine methods of unfolding. It will be a complex outcome of situated patterns, and thus highly dependent on who is doing the emoting, the context, local norms and expectations. It is these things that determine whether a particular affective practice accumulates value, other forms of capital and privilege. …it will be more difficult for those without cultural and economic capital to marshal what may be

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[45] Ibid.

> required to turn strong affect into something positive and beneficial, while those with many cultural and economic resources are likely to be able to better tolerate short-term emotional suffering in the service of some long-term goal to realise the benefits of deferred gratification.[46]

The concept of deferred gratification indeed plays quite a prominent role as Mexico City's punks evaluate who is truly punk, a favorite topic of gossip that I heard often during my fieldwork period. One way for punks to look down on others within the scene is to label them "destroy" or "rocker" punks, a term that refers to some participants' preference for immediate rather than delayed gratification. They may demonstrate this tendency through overly indulgent alcohol and drug consumption or through violent behaviors like fighting.

Thus, despite the ways in which both groups that form the punk scene use terms like "rabia" to frame appropriately intense affective responses to their environment, not all of the ways in which participants use affective overdrive to animate their performances confer prestige. Punks' performances, in order to demonstrate and prompt the circulation of affective capital, are most frequently characterized by varying types of toughness that mark both social interactions and local punk aesthetics. With the term "toughness," I refer to the qualities of various types of performance that demonstrate individual punks' self-sufficiency, indomitability, and active participation in the scene. Such performances might include showmanlike participation in competitive verbal games, fashion choices that signal environmental awareness or close acquaintance with rough living, a willingness to engage in physical fighting, as well as various other musical and social practices that display physical, emotional, and social prowess.

While most of the punks in Mexico City's scene channel their affective overdrive in performances of toughness, some are more likely to cause controversy rather than praise. A common and widely valued performance of toughness within the scene, for

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[46] Wetherell, 113.

example, is participation in the slam dance. Through such participation, punks may direct their intense affects into performances of toughness by demonstrating imperviousness to physical threat, an ability to disregard minor injury in the pursuit of a highly affective musical appreciation and camaraderie. The "portazo," on the other hand, the storming of the doors at a punk show, is also a common practice, but one that is more likely to generate discord. These two distinct performances of toughness reveal fissures within the punk scene that routinely challenge solidarity, divisions based largely on how affective overdrive is ideally generated and spent as cultural capital.

7.4 Performances of Toughness: The Slam and the Portazo

Based on a Jamesian understanding of emotion, the slam dance is frequently described as a dance of energy and solidarity, a key component of the punk show, where one may let out intense feelings in ways that hopefully reinforce a sense of community for those who frequent the scene. The dance is figured as a form of catharsis, a release valve for the letting out of potentially incendiary emotion while other feelings, like the love of solidarity, may also flow. For those who view the slam from an "outsider" perspective, however—including "non-punks" and punks from other scenes, where the slam may well have gone out of fashion—the dance appears to be an expression of aggression, if not to say violence.

The very idea that the slam is a dance may puzzle observers, who fail to see the types of patterns or skill in movement that characterize other dance forms, such as popular Latin American staples like the salsa and cumbia. Certainly, there are no steps to memorize, and no particular prescriptions for how to feel or move with the music's beat. Specific performers are never held up as exemplars of the form. Indeed, the fact that skill is unnecessary for participation in the slam is one of its more important

characteristics, further evidence of punks' rejection of performative excellence or virtuosity.

In Mexico as elsewhere, the slam dance was preceded in punk rock scenes by a dance called the pogo, in which dancers jumped around in a fairly circumscribed space, bobbing more or less with the rhythm, but in a far more exaggerated, individualistic manner than audience members who move rhythmically in place at a rock show. The switch from the relatively mild and introspective pogo to the slam appears to have occurred first in the hardcore punk scene in Southern California in the early 1980s. Participants in that scene, looking back, recall that the slam was a dance of aggression, a kind of free-for-all among "angry" teenagers who entered into a dense crowd of their peers with elbows and fists flying. They recount that visitors to the scene or their own visits to other scenes prompted startled reactions, as boys used to performing the pogo had to accustom themselves to the more aggressive practice of the slam, which was spreading rapidly from the scenes of the West Coast to major East Coast scenes like Washington, D.C. and New York as well as south of the U.S.-Mexico border.[47]

Watching punks in modern-day Mexico City perform the slam dance, it can be difficult to imagine that it has changed much since its inception in California's Orange County of the 1980s. At least in terms of form, it is the same, though if the dancers have a small amount of space in which to move, and if the excitement of the crowd is especially intense, the results of the practice may look a bit different. In response to well-performed music that "calls" the dancers out, performers begin to circle a space that opens up among the massed people of the audience, generally in a counter-clockwise direction. As they cycle through the space, the dancers launch their bodies at each other, colliding with one another and then spinning off again into their individual

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[47] American Hardcore, dir. Paul Rachmann, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment 2006, video download, 100 mins.

circuits, perhaps colliding less purposively with others as they regain their balance and momentum.

In tightly packed spaces, there may be less obvious or quick circular motion, and the circle of dancers may appear to bounce largely in place, slowly moving through space though maintaining a high incidence of collision among themselves. At large events where the feeling seems to run particularly high, the majority of the dancers might use their arms to push and shove the others in addition to colliding with the full force of their bodies, in an apparent attempt to increase their participation through forceful, fast, and regular contact with other dancers. In loosely packed spaces, the effort involved in jumping at the other dancers is more apparent, as is individual variation in the manner of performing it. Some dancers may appear to target the same friends among the group again and again, others might appear not to willingly collide with others at all, but rather to bounce off them randomly.

If anyone should fall during the course of the dance, several others move quickly to hoist that person back to his or her feet. To a greater or lesser extent depending on the venue and the character of the crowd, a kind of protective wall of people may form behind the dancers, as those who don't care to participate fully absorb and repel some of the dancers' force. Standing securely rooted to the ground, they allow the dancers bump up against them, marking the limit of the dancing space and perhaps pushing back slightly to let dancers know they've reached its edge.

Whether the dance has been faster or slower, and more or less full of rapid bodily collisions, the dancers tend to limp away from the circle at the end of the song wet with sweat, perhaps having sustained minor injuries like twisted ankles, bruises, or lips cut open with self-inflicted bites. Friends throw their arms about one another both during and after the dance, heightening their expression of camaraderie. No matter how

worn or beaten up they may be, dancers tend to come away from the slam weary-bodied but bright-faced, the excitement and energy of the activity still radiating from them.

Despite appearing like a rough, lawless activity, then, the pure expression of dancers' aggression, the dance is rule-governed and observation of the dancers often supports their commentary that the dance is about energy and friendship rather than about sustaining anger. There are occasions at which the dance becomes too frenetic, or someone behaves inappropriately within the circle of dancers, and then some kind of response occurs, spearheaded either by the band or by other fans in the audience. On occasion, individual men have been physically restrained or ridiculed by their peers because they were observed using the slam dance as an opportunity to touch female dancers inappropriately. Or, there may be a judgment that the crowd in general has become excessive in its behavior.

Returning to Apatía-No's performance of "La Caída del Tercer Mundo," which I analyzed in terms of the performers' affective labor in a previous section, I now draw attention once again to the fact that the band stopped performing mid-song to reprimand the audience. The crowd had been extremely restive throughout the hours-long gig. There had been fights in the audience, and the quality of the slam in the two circles that had opened among the dense crowd was quite aggressive. Though it was the actions of one person that ultimately caused the band to stop playing, after he jumped off of a tall structure next to the stage, the lead vocalist chose to admonish the entire crowd rather than any one participant. He asked that everyone take a bit of care, and not to be violent amongst themselves—violence was to be reserved for the state, not for relations between audience members. Thus reminded of a dominant "emotional regime" that is supposed to govern the scene, the crowd began to chant anarchist slogans in unison. The band, reassured of a slightly calmer, more responsible type of audience participation, began the song anew.

While the slam dance provides a prime opportunity for anybody in the scene to engage in a sanctioned performance of toughness, the "portazo," the storming of the doors at shows, is a controversial affective practice. The "portazo" has more local roots than the slam dance, having arisen during the repressive 1970s in Mexico City, following the collapse of the student movement, when rock music survived clandestinely in the "hoyos fonquis." "Funky holes" was the term used to describe temporary performance spaces in the barrios, often in precarious locations such as abandoned buildings, where rock fans could experience their music of choice. Staging a "portazo" was one form of countering police repression in that time period, as riot police often attempted to prevent or shut down concerts, detaining and brutalizing fans and confiscating equipment.[48] Nowadays, a "portazo" usually occurs when punks claim that a ticket price is unfair, beyond the means of the average fan or so excessive as to raise suspicions that the concert organizers' only aim is to turn a profit. Adding insult to the injury of a high ticket price, an event's manager might also deny fans the right to engage in another time-honored local punk practice, to "hacer la vaca," pooling money among friends in order to gain entrance, or otherwise negotiate the fee.

Generally, a "portazo" begins with fans' attempts to intimidate the concert personnel. Fans mass together just outside the ticketing area, and press close to whomever it is that they have designated as their adversary—concert organizers, security guards, or both—yelling out their demands and physically crowding their targets. If there is no change in the ticket price, the fans will then attempt to increase the pressure on those authority figures, throwing projectiles such as empty beer bottles towards them, and perhaps increasing the threat of bodily violence. The antagonists closest to the authority figures may increase the intensity with which they have been

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[48] See for example, Abraham Ríos Manzano, Tianguis Cultural del Chopo: Una Larga Jornada (Ciudad de México: Programa de Apoyo a las Culturas Municipales y Comunitarias (PACMYC), 1999).

pushing or poking at them, speaking too loudly and too close to their faces. Often at this point, the local police or the "granaderos" will begin to arrive.

Thus provided with the impetus for further escalation, the people at the front of the crowd rush towards the door while those behind follow closely, yelling and hurling objects, maintaining high levels of noise and confusion throughout the crowd. There may be some skirmishing, some one-on-one fighting among the mass of people, but generally, surprisingly little bodily violence actually occurs. Not once did I see punks converge on their targets in order to beat them, for example. They may engage in further looting once inside the performance space, but do not necessarily seek to exact physical revenge on the remaining concert authorities. Throughout the staging of a "portazo," the threat of physical violence anchors the real goal of forced entrance to the space while creating a significant amount of disturbance and possibly, property damage.

Being part of either the slam dance or a "portazo" is an intense affective experience, practices that get participants' hearts beating faster, adrenaline rushing. The outcome of the slam dance is better regulated and more predictable, however. Fighting does occasionally happen among dancers, but it is frowned upon, and others among the crowd will attempt to mediate a fight if one should occur. Engaging in the "portazo," on the other hand, could be read by a person's various peers in the scene as a justifiable, liberating use of violence or as a senseless act of destruction compounded by a lack of solidarity.

One of the main differences between the two practices is that the slam dance takes place within the context of musical performance, and hence in the realm of representation. It is marked by a discourse of catharsis, as though through appropriate performance of the dance, rage may be mediated, transformed into intense energy and feelings of solidarity. But the "portazo" takes place literally at the frame around the punk show—at its doors—and therefore does not happen within the security of a more

representational realm of performance. Though as I have described, there are usually limits to the aggression that participants will engage in as they storm the doors of a show, the act is predicated upon the threat of violence that takes place in a non-representational, "real world" context. Additionally, while the enhanced physical and affective experience of the "portazo" may be shared among participants, that intense affect is not spent through direct inter-relation among scene participants, but is directed outwards, towards people configured as outsiders. Though both the slam and the "portazo" are affective practices that have long existed within the punk scene, and though they both may unify participants through the experience of intense affect, the "portazo" reveals discrepancies within the punk scene regarding beliefs about the proper place of violence and aggression.

The violence and aggression of physical fighting in general occupies an uneasy place in punk discourse. Many of the most universally respected figures in the scene are actually quite pacific in their inter-personal relations, or at least do not engage in bodily violence with any regularity. Others have a strong history and reputation for their prowess in fighting. While some punk scene participants insist that their fearful public image as violence-prone is an unfair stereotype, motivated by hostility to their ideology, punks' reputation for physical violence actually seems to help them achieve certain group goals, particularly when relating to individuals and groups outside of the scene. The Espacio Anarcopunk's "occupation" of the Chopo market, for example, which is officially tolerated by market authorities, occurred in part to blunt the threat of violence that thwarted punk participation had repeatedly instigated.[49]

That same threat of violence means that the "portazo" is almost always a successful endeavor, despite the fact that the scene itself sustains the collateral damage

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[49] Ibid.

of detentions and police brutality, sometimes unleashed on innocent bystanders. Since everyone present outside the event benefits from the lowered ticket price, there are many people in the scene who welcome the practice nevertheless. The "portazo" also creates quite a spectacle, which passers-by frequently stop to watch, just as fistfights among scene participants generate large, enthusiastic audiences of peers as well as disinterested on-lookers.

On the other hand, many argue that violence within the punk scene is nothing more than a continuation of the self-destructive habits of early punk rockers or mimic the "senseless" violence of the state. People who hold such views are among those who may label punks who show a propensity for fighting as "destroy" or "rocker" punks. While virtually no one contests the importance of the high-intensity "energy" of an aggressive practice like the slam dance—or of myriad other performances of toughness that punks enact—the "portazo" and other incidents that involve a recognized threat of physical violence are met with a far lesser degree of general approbation. In addition to positing a gratuitousness to "portazo" violence, some point to the fact that the targets of the attack are not necessarily responsible for the ticket pricing, that some concert organizers are actually themselves part of the punk scene or "la banda" more generally, or that tactics such as a boycott would be more effective ways to express discontent about ticketing policies.

Despite some key areas of unresolved tension regarding the proper application of violence among punk scene participants, an affinity for vehement sonic and social experience provides an elemental if ultimately shaky sense of broad solidarity among them. In any case, the positive valuation of toughness demands that people who frequent the scene project a rugged self-reliance, including the ability to defend themselves from physical assault. For that reason, organizing and teaching self-defense classes is a common activity in the scene, a practice promoted as means to help punks

to fend off attacks from various quarters—from police, from rough city life, from other youth, from rape and domestic violence. A small number of punk scene participants also train in the martial arts. Rather than promoting the ideal of violence as a last resort, however, some of the most vocal proponents of the necessity for "self-defense" are actually well known for their aggression.

If the networks of exchange, particularly of books, music, and services, are some of the ways in which Mexico City's punk scene participants enact their belief in the importance of "autogestión," participation in performances of toughness forms another. While the trading and swapping of knowledge helps people to perform the "outreach" that Mexico City's punks define as part of "autogestión," engaging in sanctioned performances of toughness like the slam dance is a form of "training," teaching punk scene participants to enjoy the rush of aggressive bodily contact while also giving them practice in taking hard knocks with equanimity.

7.5 Nostalgia and Self-Defense in El DeFectuoso

While different people in the punk social networks may enact intense feeling through differing aesthetic and social choices, the common valorization of particular affective practices sheds light on the place of "violence" in the punk scene, in its broader Mexico City context. The vehemence of love fuels the camaraderie and loyalty of solidarity, against the odds. In fact, vehemence is necessary in both love and rage. Solidarity being a tenuous affect among a divided punk scene, it must be performed with alacrity. Meanwhile, the vehemence of rage promotes a necessary mental and physical toughness, an acute awareness of political and social ills, as well as the need to protect oneself from them. Due to the difficult environment of el DeFectuoso, rage may be prompted by the chaos, noise, and dysfunction of one of the biggest cities on earth, but

its intensity can be harnessed. What some might term violence—from aggressive interpersonal behaviors to edgy song lyrics that seem to promote violence against state authorities—many of Mexico City's punks would likely term self-defense.

During a period in which he was contemplating lyrics for Rhuckuss's first album, the band's vocalist told me that he was looking to avoid overplayed tropes like invective against the police, which has been a perennial punk song theme—and with good reason. The trope is grounded in the experience of police repression, which is still a common hazard for "la banda" today, though reportedly far more common among rock music fans a couple of generations back.

The accounts of older people among my collaborators in the punk scene buttress claims that youth cultural expression was once much more heavily policed than it is today. And yet, police repression continues, a practice knit into the fabric of structural violence in the metropolis. In addition to hearing many tales of police brutality from my interlocutors, I witnessed it so often as to believe that indeed it does form a disturbing element of daily life for city youth, among other challenges wrought through structural and symbolic violence. Encountering the attack I tell of above on three underage teenagers including one girl, I did not see anything that surprised me after a year of Mexico City life, from the viciousness of the policeman's abuse to the dull stares of the passers-by unwittingly trapped as observers.

The impunity of police who commit such acts flourishes in an environment in which even the most heinous crimes go unpunished, due not only to the corruption of the political system, but also to Mexico's broken judicial function. As the body count rises in the "war on drugs," this fact has drawn some international scrutiny.[50] Some local

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[50] For one of many examples, see Mark Lacey, "In Mexican Drug War, Investigators Are Fearful," New York Times, 19 October 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/17/world/americas/17juarez.html?pagewanted=all, accessed 4 December, 2012.

people simply take matters of justice into their own hands, as the case of Sali Eiler demonstrates. Faced with the certainty that neither legal authorities nor the media would undertake any serious investigation of the horrific assault and murder, her friends felt bound to attempt some measure of justice themselves, independently seeking out their suspect and by some accounts, enacting violence on him in turn.

Mexico City's punks are also very aware of direct political violence that occurs in Mexico, in some cases because of their participation in actions that have suffered severe state repression, such as demonstrations against government seizure of land in Atenco and the Oaxaca teachers' strikes. In 2010, I watched news footage with interlocutors who were incensed about the paramilitary killings of human rights workers in a caravan to the Triqui region of San Juan Copala, Oaxaca, viewing it as just another event in a pattern of violence against Mexico's indigenous communities. Together we searched for information about the female journalists' corpses that had been dumped in parks in the metropolitan zone of Mexico City not long before my departure in 2011. Some of my interlocutors said that they themselves had been tortured in police custody following their detention at protest marches, including large anti-globalization protests like the one in Cancún in 2003. Certainly, at the handful of protest marches I participated in over the course of my fieldwork, I encountered the chillingly precise work of the riot police as they fired tear gas into crowds, subdued individual protestors with their batons, or created stampedes among frightened marchers confronted with rows of clear plastic shields impeding their free movement.

Participants in Mexico City's punk scene are keenly aware that not only do such acts result from institutionalized violence, but also that poverty itself is a form of violence. In fact, many people in the punk scene and beyond believe that it is poverty and the extreme inequality of wealth distribution that fuels the Mexican drug cartels'

power. Independent reporter John Gibler quotes one of few Mexican journalists still actively working the "narco" beat:

> I don't think there is any drug war. All they do is respond to violence with violence. A real drug war would spend resources on education and health and combating poverty. That would be a war against drugs, because it would take away the narco's most fertile terrain, youth.[51]

Another of Gibler's sources in Ciudad Juárez quickly summarizes the local factors contributing to that city's infamous struggle with crime, from the "femicide" of scores of murdered women to drug violence, noting the importance of the "maquila" to the city's economy as well as land speculation and other power grabs by local elites. Commenting on a tendency within the international media to oversimplify the narrative of the drug war, of good guys versus bad, he concludes instead that "the state…has lost its monopoly on violence."[52] Such uncertainty about the responsibility for acts of extreme violence creates not only the fear and silence that Gibler highlights as the everyday results of the "war on drugs," but also the "desconfianza," the lack of trust that divides Mexico's people, the suspicion between neighbors that my collaborators and friends reported to me and that I myself felt as a temporary city resident.

"Desconfianza" may also be prompted by knowledge of the history of the government's use and training of "porros" over several decades of the twentieth century to combat dissidence. Donald Hodges writes that the children of Mexican workers were recruited as early as the 1940s, during the Cárdenas administration, to perform "legally questionable" tasks like breaking up political meetings, vandalizing an opposition party's propaganda, and the like.[53] In the 1960s, "porros" were given special training, and employed for a whole range of "special services," which ultimately included

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[51] John Gibler, To Die In Mexico: Dispatches From Inside the Drug War (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2011), 89.
[52] Ibid, 190.
[53] Donald C. Hodges, Mexican Anarchism After the Revolution (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 124.

attacking protestors during the late 1960s and early 70s. Hodges describes the training that "porros" underwent in the late 1960s, as they were transformed into the special "hawks" unit that would ultimately confront student protestors on Bloody Thursday in 1971.

> The hawks had different training camps: Ixtapalapa, San Juan de Aragón, and the Cuchilla del Tesoro. The best-equipped camps for commandos was [sic] in San Juan de Aragón: it had pits, tracks, hanging bars, wooden stairs, vehicles, a military academy. They practiced judo, karate, tae kwon do. … They studied the use of firearms, from the simplest to the M2. To conceal their training, their camps were surrounded by barbed wire and police guards kept bystanders away.[54]

With paramilitary forces historically recruited and trained from the barrios of Mexico City, participants in the punk scene expressed concern at times that street toughs from their own neighborhoods were in fact "porros," specially trained and paid by the government.

These various circumstances inform punk scene participants' strategies for self-protection, including a fetishization of self-defense training and gear. Mirroring the training that "porros" are believed to be given, punks' self-protection strategies include an intense interest in martial arts and self-defense classes. The same sensibility contributes to choices that some punk scene participants make about their style of dress, incorporating items such as military boots, cups, and brass knuckles, in addition to the spikes and chains that broadcast their toughness. An affinity for affective overdrive also provides a source of training, preparing punk scene participants through the physical and affective impact of extreme sound on the body, as well as through aggressive, corporeal contact with other participants in the scene through a practice like the slam dance. With so much intense sound and feeling all around them, plus the

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[54] Ibid, 125.

uncertainty and violence of contemporary Mexican life, the general mood at punk scene events is often conflictive and volatile even as it is high spirited and fun seeking.

On several occasions, my punk friends teased or chided me about my perceived lack of toughness, conveyed through my non-punk appearance and quiet, non-confrontational demeanor. The fact that I did finally lose my cool, shoving a well-respected member of the scene, initially troubled me greatly. With time, and after a long period of tense reconciliation with my aggressor-friend, I came to see that surprising, humiliating moment as unnervingly successful participant observation. Though I could not possibly experience directly some of the factors that my interlocutors encountered in their everyday lives—such as subsisting on informal work—I could not escape various threats of violence that are part and parcel of daily life in Mexico City. While shrugging off the armed robbery I experienced on the night of the U.S. presidential elections with feelings of resignation and powerlessness, I reacted to a sense of threat among punk collaborators not only with a loud, enraged voice, but also with my body. Thereafter, my punk friends would joke that nobody ought to mess with me, that I was tougher than I looked (tongues held firmly in cheek).

While many of punks' performances of toughness appear as forms of self-defense training, as concrete interventions in the present situation, the "portazo" in today's punk scene seems instead to point to a different affective experience: nostalgia. Going through the motions of a practice that once suggested resistance to targeted, organized state repression, those who perpetuate the practice of the "portazo" today do so with the vague justification that they are somehow striking a blow to "capitalism." With this uneasy substitution serving as their hazy rationale, those members of the punk scene who participate in the modern-day "portazo" may claim to express their rage, but they also simultaneously betray a longing for the more obvious enemy of previous generations.

In the diffuse contemporary political context, in which various parties vie for power while the Mexican state has lost its monopoly on violence not only to the drug cartels but also to the slow, grinding violence of global neo-liberal trade policies, the old menace of the all-powerful, repressive PRI government lurks, until recently a phantom yet potentially seductive target of ire. As Svetlana Boym notes in her chapter on the role of nostalgia in post-Soviet Russia, "Nostalgia works as a double-edged sword: it seems to be an emotional antidote to politics, and thus remains the best political tool."[55] She recounts that despite Russians' initial urge to remember life under totalitarianism after the fall of the Soviet Union, aided by a trove of newly public official documents and personal memoirs, a decade later, "the collective trauma of the past was hardly acknowledged" through political reconciliation or in social life. Instead, Boym analyzes a number of indications that Russians indulged in a nostalgic, ahistorical, and fantastical idea of the past, "partaking collectively in a selective forgetting."[56]

During the last few months of my years in Mexico, commentators wondered if a similar affective climate would determine the outcome of the presidential elections in July of 2012, in which the PRI candidate, Enrique Peña Nieto, appeared to be the favorite. While young voters, a potentially powerful force in Mexican electoral politics, had little memory of life under the repressive one-party state, those who had lived through the ultimate years of PRI dominance showed signs of a selective forgetting similar to that Boym describes. Instead of remembering the abuses of power perpetrated under the PRI, many nostalgic voters seemed to hope that a more powerful state could effectively counter the extreme violence that permeates Mexican life.

In addition to the desire to more clearly delineate the good from the evil, among participants in Mexico City's punk scene, the contentious practice of the "portazo" also

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[55] Svetlana Boym, The Future of Nostalgia (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 58.
[56] Ibid.

signals nostalgia for a virile, class-based solidarity that was supposedly strong enough to persuade gangs to give up their internecine violence and embrace the love and protection of "la banda." The practice of the "portazo" may indeed have boosted feelings of unity among youth in the barrios once, as they defended themselves from police repression. But in the contemporary punk scene, assembled from a slightly broader membership and grounded in a different cultural and political context, the "portazo" reveals the challenges and instabilities of solidarity among "la banda punk."

8. Encounters

Most of our conversation was about books as we moved through the city one Saturday afternoon. When we arrived at the party site, he made a beeline for a back room, where there was a table set up for displaying literature. Over the course of the evening, I heard the usual gossip and witnessed the common small snubs of anarchists who disapproved of the punks' raucous behavior and doubted their political commitment. I asked my bookish friend why he didn't hang out with the anarchists rather than the punk scene? He let fly with a snub of his own. They were trapped in their books. All talk, no action.

I arrived with my violin in order to carry out our time swap. In exchange for some demonstrations on how to draw a good sound from the instrument, my student invited me to sit down at the sewing machine. Roles reversed, I practiced making seams on some scrap material, my foot cautiously working the pedal of her grandmother's machine.

There was a handful of men who hung out regularly in the Espacio Anarcopunk at the Chopo Market who did not identify themselves as punk, but as anarchists, full stop. Most had once thought of themselves as punk, but were disenchanted with the scene. They were often more approachable and willing to talk than their punk friends, especially on the topic of anarchism. One took to inviting me to events in anarchist collectives. Mostly, he accomplished it by word of mouth, but one day he wanted to be able to tell me later about an event that was in the works. He took a phone out of his pocket and flipped it open. The image of a voluptuous blonde pin-up girl stared out at me from the small screen as I rattled off my number.

A small, pocket-sized flier provided me with the information for a gig that attracted my interest, an old-school punk event called the Festival Katartiko ("cathartic" festival). The flier proclaimed that the event had been celebrated annually for 19 years, a testament to the continuing importance of catharsis in punk life. Beneath the event's title, the logos of eighteen bands were reproduced across the jet black ground of the flier. Apart from two band logos that were printed in a slightly larger font, signifying the relative importance of their presence at the event, the others were all the same size, distributed evenly across the surface of the image. Marking the flier with a red pen, I tried to keep track of who had performed as the event wore on, ticking off a logo here, a logo there.

Workshops, workshops, workshops. After spending several months with "la banda," you'd be hard-pressed to think of a skill you wanted that someone couldn't teach you. Workshops formed a significant part of cultural programming in several squats and at festivals. Computing, bicycle repair, language lessons, guitar lessons, reading groups, art classes, recycling, composting, welding, sewing, vegan cooking, African dance, photography, herbology, silk-screening. Occasionally, I could make myself useful by sharing a bit of my own knowledge.

The Auditorio Che Guevarra, on the main UNAM campus, was always a magnet for gossip and intrigue. A woman was found dead near the auditorium during my fieldwork period, and the Che regulars were a target of suspicion. The man believed to be Sali Eiler's killer had also hung out at the Che periodically, a few years back. In addition to some questionable characters who frequented the space, there were rumors

that government spies had infiltrated it, and that university authorities attempted to sabotage the building so as to make life difficult for those who squatted there.

The Che was the site for the first Femstival, a decision that the women took after thorough discussion of the potential risks of holding the event in a location with security issues. Ultimately, it seemed that the benefits outweighed the drawbacks, and so we collaborated with regulars at the Che to make the event happen. On the second night of the festival, one of my tasks was to regularly pass by the bathrooms to make sure they were reasonably clean and serviceable. In one, I found water all over the floor. The toilet was blocked. I fetched a plunger, but as I bent to the unpleasant task, a man who hung out at the Che tapped my shoulder and said he would do it for me. As he set to it, he grumbled that the toilet was always backing up and claimed that clogging the toilets was one of the things that the authorities did to sabotage the site. I felt laughter rise in my throat, but after darting a glance at him, I suppressed it. There was no indication that he was joking.

How do you refuse work when, actually, there isn't any? Commentary among some in the local punk scene, who largely engaged in informal labor, that to work was simply to strengthen "the system" puzzled me. Reading fanzines written by punks in North America, the issue made greater sense, as I perused testimonials of people who recounted that they only worked as much as they needed to get by, making do as much as possible through reliance on social networks and drastically whittling down their consumerist tendencies. Then too, there was the rumor about the Portland punks. A friend who participated in Mexico City's punk scene informed me that she had heard that they typically refused to work, and also that many of them were on food stamps.

One evening, I arrived at a gig alone, hoping I would know people in attendance. As I listened alone in the crowd, an unfamiliar person materialized instead. He was the friend of a friend, and he had been told that I might help out with a project. A number of his friends, who identified themselves as "primitivist" anarchists, were interested in reading the writings of Ted Kaczynski—a.k.a. the Unabomber—but they didn't have a Spanish translation. They were interested in his back-to-the-land lifestyle, as well as his social analysis.[1] Doubtfully, I promised to check it out. In addition to my objections to the author and his tactics, I had little practice writing in Spanish, and feared that the project would pose a time-consuming challenge to my linguistic capabilities.

Kaczynski's writing did not exactly inspire me with its quality or penetrating social analysis. It was also extremely long. But I discovered evidence that it had already been translated into Spanish, so I passed that along as I also tried to track it down. In a bit, I learned that somebody had found the Spanish version. I was relieved to be off the hook.

Two days, two perspectives on direct action. The first one comes with a mini-lecture on the history of the term. Direct action is the lack of political representation, the direct interaction of people in daily life and in the resolution of conflict. Unfortunately, the term had been appropriated by those who used it to refer to breaking windows, say, at a research facility that conducted experiments on animals. But really, it was about putting anarchist ideals into everyday practice. People did this differently. There were the true blue, time-tested anarchists, who had been actively living a committed lifestyle for years. There were the sympathizers, who let their attention be diverted by work or

[1] Neo-primitivist anarchism has been closely associated with John Zerzan, the author of several books on the evils of technology and "civilization." He is also a vocal supporter of Ted Kaczynski, despite objecting to the "collateral damage" and "random" nature of the bombings he carried out. See for example, "Whose Unabomber?" in Running on Emptiness: The Pathology of Civilization (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2002), 151-155.

family, but who still acted out of a sense of community, who participated in events, who donated their time and money. Then there were the friends, who might appear occasionally at events, possibly out of nostalgia for greater past involvement. Worst of all were the "pinches intelectuales," who read anarchist literature and talked the talk, before turning around and voting for the PRD.

No, said my second source the following day, alleging that my first informant's pacifism put him out of touch with the real meaning of the term. Direct action does not exclude "violence," which is necessary on occasion. The trick is to know how to counter violence with violence, responding in kind to state repression, the violence of corporate capitalism.

Staying for a such a long time in the city, I burned through my small stock of English-language books and yearned for more. Good English literature was not something easily found at the city's many "tianguis" and used bookstores, and the prices for new books in shops were shocking. Once I had moved into an apartment and could provide proof of residence with utility bills, I resolved to get a borrower's card at the Biblioteca Vasconcelos, a new and beautiful public library not far from the Chopo Market, where unusually, the public could actually check out books as well as read them on site.

Getting a library card is a bureaucratic tangle for anyone. My first visit ended in failure because I had chosen the wrong hour for the task. My second visit ended in failure because I did not have all of the documentation that I needed. Fortunately, a friend lived nearby, and it was good to have someone to chat with as I waited to complete the three separate steps of my third attempt at completing the process.

Greening the city became a common preoccupation among people in the punk scene and beyond during my time in el Monstruo. The city made bicycle shares available, expanded the Metro system, and planted gardens. Friends in the punk scene too always had ambitious environmental projects going. At one party, we quizzed a couple of guys who were learning to construct earth toilets. At another, we learned to make our own lotion, free of industrial chemicals. People designed and constructed bicycle-powered household appliances for display at events.

Increasingly, friends in the punk scene began dreaming of escaping the city altogether. There were plans to acquire land, to build autonomous communities out in the countryside. A friend showed me a picture of her little plot, one among several friends', where she hoped to build a home some day among the thriving plant life that she pointed out, each by name.

Not long after investigating the Unabomber translation project, I was scheduled to go back to the U.S. for a bit. Arriving at Customs and Immigration at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport, I waited as the officer scanned my passport. After a moment, he turned cold blue eyes on me in intense scrutiny, and then again at the screen. Brusquely, he asked me a series of questions about my activities in Mexico, and where specifically I had been. As I had indicated on my immigration form, I repeated that I had spent the entire six-month period in Mexico City, and that I was a student. He spent some more time looking at the screen. Finally, taking my immigration form, he marked it with an "A" enclosed within a circle and handed it to me wordlessly.[2]

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[2] Historians relate that the capital "A" enclosed in a circle, which has come to serve as an icon for "anarchism," was designed to illustrate Proudhon's statement that "Anarchy is Order." See for example, Peter Marshall, Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010), 558.

"What's this for?" I asked. He didn't reply but simply indicated where I should go. At the designated spot, it seemed that "A" was for "Agriculture"? I was told to place my bags on a conveyer belt so that they could undergo a special screening.

In a few days, I was on a Greyhound bus from Chicago to Missoula, reading avidly about the history of the state of Montana, where I would be visiting friends. As the beautiful wide-open scenery expanded around me, I learned that native Montanans didn't think too much of Kaczynski's wilderness skills, or of his social skills either.

It was a well-attended party, difficult at its peak to move through the dense crowd. Celebrating the opening of a new space that housed a library and provided a location for meetings, there were speakers and performers of various stripes. There was a pantomime about capitalism as modern-day slavery, and then a series of hip hop libertario artists began to perform. The lights were dimmed as images of masked protestors flinging Molotov cocktails appeared on a video loop, a backdrop for the rhymes.

Over time, I heard a number of complaints about how difficult it was to find anarchist literature in Spanish. The Hormiga Libertaria was one local organization that attempted to rectify the problem, publishing translations of key texts. Other small fragments of anarchist writings appeared in fanzines. Used books, mostly by so-called "classical" anarchists like Bakunin, Malatesta, and Kropotkin, as well as early twentieth-century Mexican anarchist Flores Magón, also showed up at the Chopo Market and on display tables at events from time to time.

We seemed to be testing the Krishnas' patience. My companion had invited me to meet for a vegan meal at the cafeteria in a Krishna center close to downtown Mexico

City. Increasingly, staff members hovered around us, taking away each unused utensil, wiping down the area around his plate as he ate, slowly, slowly, slowed further by the stories he told. He was reminiscing about the 1990s, what he considered to be the heyday of the punk scene in Mexico, when it was really active, with many events to attend each week and strong collectives that achieved impressive things. There were international “encuentros” with other punk scenes in Latin America, which Mexican “delegates” attended. There were really great fanzines being produced. Now, he hardly had the desire to attend any events at all, even the musical ones. It was all just about partying, he alleged, pure drugs-and-alcohol.

Punk vocalists have many ways of whipping up the enthusiasm of audiences in addition to their vocal performances. They may jump into a crowd of slam dancing fans, or pass the microphone to would-be vocalists who are pleased to shout a verse. One vocalist friend complained about passing the mike, however, because it always came back nasty and wet, full of others’ saliva and sweat.

After a final flurry of emails and text messages, we found a time to meet for a post-Femstival wrap-up. There were participants who needed to be reimbursed for materials they’d bought, there were issues to discuss and plans to make for the future, and there ought to be some kind of celebration for pulling off such a big, complex event. We took care of the business and had a little raffle, distributing artwork that had not been reclaimed. While there was criticism, argument, and blaming, there was also contented chatter, rounds of congratulations. We wondered if we could do something more political in future years, something less centered on music and crafts. Was the Femstival not in itself political? Discussion. And proposals: for a documentary, for a campaign to help incarcerated women, and for a repeat of the Femstival.

The collective that published the bulletin of the Espacio Anarcopunk was having a meeting to put together their fanzine in the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir. One member really admired another's photo-essay on the history of punk and anarchism. There were several other editorial-type articles submitted, an interview with a Spanish punk band that had recently toured through Mexico, and one member had written a poem. Then there were jeers and teasing. It was clear that one person had not really read the submissions. Worse, his own submission was a reprint he had sourced from the Internet, an article on the political situation in Greece.

There was another celebration of International Women's Day, at a bar out in Neza. It began slowly in mid-afternoon, with women displaying crafts for sale, with a table of literature. I was introduced to a man who specialized in reconstructive dentistry for women who had been victims of severe domestic violence. And then I was called to participate in a self-defense workshop. As three men sat snickering with their round of beers, about ten of us followed the advice of a female martial arts instructor, who wanted us to learn to throw punches. Two of the women were naturals, and they sent the punching bag swinging. The rest of us struggled, particularly one woman whose long, talon-like fingernails prevented her from closing her hand into anything like a fist.

I took to bringing back a small stash of books after each of my trips to the U.S., roughly every six months. Returning not long after my participation in the Femstival, I was engrossed in Jeffrey Juris's Networking Futures, an ethnography of the decision-making groups, discussion, and consensus processes in the anti-globalization movement. Despite the ways in which anarchism and anti-globalization movements overlapped, with some participants in the punk scene having taken part in anti-globalization

activities in Mexico in the early years of the twenty-first century, I had not witnessed anything like what Juris described at the meetings of collective organizations.

The information Juris related seemed particularly germane in the aftermath of the Femstival, which had been marked by a good deal of in-fighting, as well as resentment towards one woman who had emerged as a de-facto leader. That experience, as well as my experience at other collectives, persuaded me of the "tyranny of structurelessness"—that without specific practices designed to foster the sharing of organizational power and responsibilities, informal hierarchies would inevitably develop among a group of participants in spite of everyone's best intentions.[3] I attempted to get some discussion going on the topic, especially among the women. Despite some small interest, the general conclusion seemed to be that people didn't want to waste their time on such "mamadas."[4]

Benefit concerts and parties are another popular way of doing good for scene participants. After the closure of the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir, I attended a handful of events billed as opportunities to earn some cash for the struggling institution. Another series of events were planned in solidarity with the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (SME) the powerful electricians' union that went on strike to protest the government take-over of the utility. Voluntary donations covered the costs of printing up some broadsheets and fanzines. Between weekends, I would save as many coins as I could, to have plenty to donate to the various causes I might meet with at weekend events. Eventually, the zipper broke on the little change purse I carried to those activities, stuffed with peso coins for "cooperación."

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[3] The "tyranny of structurelessness" refers to a pamphlet circulated within the U.S. women's movement in the 1970s, after feminists engaged in consciousness-raising activities noticed the rise of informal hierarchies occurring repeatedly in their groups. See Jo Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness" in Second Wave, vol. 2, no. 1 (1972), 20-25.
[4] "Mamada" is a slang term signifying a kind of stupidity.

The club was reopening after a month-long period of being "en clausurado," shut down by city authorities, supposedly for the trouble its audiences unleashed on the sidewalks out front, huge masses of fans drinking and cavorting. A month didn't seem like that long a penalty, I said. There was another punk-patronized club downtown that had been in a "clausurado" state for much longer. Why was that? Silence. I tried another question. What could they do about the huge crowds that packed the club and overflowed onto the street? Teasing: in future, they will assure that everyone has exactly one square foot of space at gigs. Laughter. In small print at the bottom of the flier for the re-opening event, I discovered the following admonishment: "Respect the building and its surroundings so that events like this may continue. Punk is consciousness; the chaos is in your own fucking head." Suddenly, my friend was happy to inform. He was the one responsible for the line.

I was away from Mexico when I got an email stating that an "ocupa" where a friend lived was under the threat of eviction, which might occur in the early morning hours the following day. The message encapsulated the history of the squat, describing it as a years-long project, a place rescued from the exploitative system of private property where libertarian youth could find their dreams and exercise their ideas for building a better world. In addition to making people aware of the eviction threat, the message asked them to come down to the location, to present a large body of supporters to defend against the possibility of police action.

When I returned a few weeks later, the situation was still tenuous though the occupants no longer felt in danger of immediate ejection. Instead, money needed to be raised in order to "comprar gente." My friend implied that bribes needed to be offered so that the squat could continue operating for while longer.

The meeting had been going on for almost four hours. Just about everyone had made a trip or two to the bathroom, or to search out a scarf in the chilly room. I was grateful to the person at my left, a stranger who handed me a slice of orange. Well into the third hour, people began to stand and bounce in place, encouraging blood flow to return to their lower bodies.

Despite all of the time spent at the meeting, I found that I was hard-pressed to articulate exactly what we accomplished. Some attempt had been made to correct the bureaucratic hassles of the last hours-long meeting, by instituting a moderator and rules for discussion. The first order of business was to decide what the day's business was, and in what order to tackle it. The moderator was tasked with keeping track of who wanted to speak and in what order they had asked permission to speak. There were several digressions as people forgot how the meeting was being conducted, or what the order of business was, and illegally jumped in to the conversation. The first order of business took up a whole lot of time, as did the second, the third, and the rest. Some people spoke for inordinate amounts of time. These same speakers asked for the floor repeatedly, and were never denied. There was no sanctioned process for interjecting comments or for checking to see whether there was any consensus in the room. Throughout the long unfolding of this tedious, inorganic process, I marvelled at the fact that very few people abandoned their uncomfortable seats to stride for the door, as I repeatedly fantasized of doing.

9. Solidarity

It took little time for me to gauge the seriousness with which most of my acquaintances in Mexico City's punk scene identified as anarchists. In many cases, this anarchist self-identification seemed to go beyond the association between punk and "anarchy," which has existed since the consolidation of the musical genre in the 1970s.[1] In addition to that little explored link between global punk and anarchism, it became increasingly clear to me that my punk collaborators' politics were also informed by the strong historical presence of anarchism in Mexican labor struggles since the 19th century.[2] This history was an interest that they shared with several, more strictly anarchist collectives in the city, which nevertheless tended to have at least a few "punk" members each.

In this chapter, I provide an introduction to anarchism and then place it in its Mexican context in order to explore the ways in which anarchist thought and practice structure a punk solidarity for participants in Mexico City's scene. My aim is not to instigate a debate about whether my punk friends are truly anarchists. Given the breadth and variety of anarchist thought and practice, it seems to me that most of the people I knew in the punk scene who claimed to be anarchists were morally invested in anarchism's basic tenets, despite the fact that some were better informed than others and some were more engaged with extra-musical social and political activities. Instead of evaluating the truth of punks' claims, I want to investigate how they live the links they posit between punk and anarchism. In particular, I am interested in the notion that

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[1] While even a group like the Sex Pistols was associated with anarchy because they named it in their lyrics, invoking a stereotypical misunderstanding of the word to evoke chaos and disorder (for example, "Anarchy in the U.K."), author Craig O'Hara identifies later groups like Crass and Discharge in Britain and The Dead Kennedys and Los Crudos in the United States as the ones who first took a serious interest in anarchism. See O'Hara, "Anarchism" in The Philosophy of Punk: More Than Noise (San Francisco: AK Press, 1999), 70-101.
[2] While people within various punk scenes have written about the links between punk and anarchism, the small body of academic literature on punk does not often engage with that subject.

punk is a social movement—an idea that I heard not only from several of my interlocutors, but also one that I have encountered on occasion in academic literature about anarchism.[3]

In the wake of the so-called anti-globalization movement and the social justice movements that sprang up across the globe in 2011, there has been a renewed scholarly interest in social movement theory.[4] Many authors point to the anarchist ideals and practices that have been put into play in groups from the Direct Action Network, which famously organized the "Battle of Seattle" against the World Trade Organization in 1999, to Occupy Wall Street. There is a great deal of discussion about the ways in which these contemporary networks do and do not conform to the picture of the "new social movements" from the 1970s and 1980s, despite drawing on some of their tactical and organizational strategies. Recalling networking models like Deleuze's rhizome, many authors emphasize the diffuse and shifting membership of modern social movements, as well as their ideological pluralism.[5]

Despite insistence on their anarchism and vocal rejection of Marxism and "bourgeois" liberalism, punks in Mexico City demonstrate that a plurality of ideas about anarchism itself may coexist among a body of self-identified anarchists. In tracing the history of anarchism in Mexico, I hope to tease out these various strands of the political philosophy that live today among Mexico City's punks and their anarchist friends in "la banda" at large. To what extent do these ideas and practices contribute to punks'

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[3] See for example, Jeff Shantz, Active Anarchy: Political Practice in Contemporary Movements (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011). See also Richard J. F. Day, Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements (Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press, 2005). While Shantz refers to a broad punk "movement," Day specifically refers to "crust punk" as a challenge to "the unbridgeable chasm" between "social anarchism" and "lifestyle anarchism" (20-21).
[4] Like many others, I recognize the inadequacy of the term "anti-globalization movement" to account for the aims of global networks that staged high-profile protests against corporate capitalism in the 1990s and 2000s. Also like most of them, however, I see no choice but to continue using the term that has come to represent them.
[5] See for example Barbara Epstein, "Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement" in Monthly Review, vol. 53, no. 4 (2001), 1-14.

claims to belonging in a social movement? How does punk as a body of aesthetic and musical practices inform punks' understanding of anarchist ethics and political struggle? In this chapter, I will return to some of the same preoccupations that shaped previous chapters, examining punks' networking strategies as well as the importance of affect in creating and maintaining the solidarity through which their various networks constitute themselves. I also explore the pleasures and pitfalls of using musical and other aesthetic performance as a basis for expressing a politics of opposition. Through these sites of investigation, I will revisit the notion of music scenes as little cultures in an attempt to limn the relationship of music and politics, punk and social movements. What does social movement theory have to gain by acknowledging punk as a social movement? What do Mexico City's punks have to gain by identifying themselves as anarchists, and as participants in a social movement?

9.1 An Introduction to Anarchism

It was in the context of my fieldwork that I first learned about anarchism, largely under the tutelage of my friends and acquaintances in the punk scene and among "la banda." I also began to inform myself about anarchism independently. Despite the fact that many people were ready to tell me what anarchism was, I found that my informants' conceptions were often quite different, while sharing some basic, underlying features. Meanwhile, in my self-directed learning about anarchism, I initially found myself in the same situation my punk collaborators complained about. I could easily pick up a book by Bakunin or an excerpt from Emma Goldman's writings, but finding a body of literature that included authors beyond the classical anarchism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to learn from in a more systematic way, was something that I didn't accomplish until I returned from my fieldwork to the privilege of a well-stocked

university library. My experience of learning about anarchism thus happened fairly organically—as it had for my friends in the punk scene—through local practices that inspired my desire to learn more, both through reading and further participation. Some writers stress that in fact, anarchism confounds the expectation of a clear rift between theory and practice, especially in its more modern iterations.[6] They may refer to this dynamic as a preference for a "propaganda of the deed," enacting anarchist moral values rather than focusing on rhetorical persuasion.[7] So, it was not necessarily unusual or even undesirable that my initial learning should take place largely through participant observation among "la banda," from those who favored the punk scene to those who preferred participating in anarchist collectives.

Reading more in depth about anarchism after my experience in Mexico City, I learned that there is a diversity of perspectives on what anarchism is, with anarchists self-identifying according to various sub-categories of anarchist thought and a small body of scholars in a nascent "anarchist studies" seeking to bring clarity and accord to their own definitions. Partly, this is due to the history of anarchist philosophy. Unlike a tradition such as Marxism, which also encompasses a variety of perspectives on theory and best practices, anarchism does not have one central author or text that its proponents may respond to, challenge, and re-create. Peter Marshall, a historian of anarchism, compares its history to a river with many tributaries, flowing from "forerunners of anarchy" as diverse as Taoist and early Christian philosophy, through

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[6] For example, sociologist and self-identified anarchist Jeff Shantz discusses his choice to write about "practical anarchists" as follows: "Rather than take an approach that views anarchism as a political or revolutionary movement that 'enters into' specific social struggles, I address those anarchists who emphasize the immanent anarchy in everyday practices of mutual aid and solidarity. … Within perspectives of 'everyday anarchy,' anarchism as a movement builds upon ways of living and relating that are already present in people's everyday lives rather than reflecting aspects of a future post-revolutionary society. At the same time, 'everyday anarchy' engages these practices from a political or revolutionary perspective that seeks a broader anti-authoritarian transformation of social relations" (2-3).
[7] Ibid, 52.

to "classical" anarchists of the 18th and 19th centuries like Godwin and Tolstoy.[8] If that river appeared to have mostly petered out after the Russian Revolution, it sprang forth again at mid-twentieth century among the New Left and in 1960s counterculture more broadly.[9] As I have mentioned, the anti-globalization networks of the late 1990s and early 21st century, as well as more recent protest movements from the Arab Spring to anti-austerity protestors in Greece to "Los Indignados" in Spain also demonstrate an awareness of anarchist thought and practice.[10]

Many accounts of anarchism as a political philosophy begin with stereotypical images of the anarchist as violent assassin or bomb-thrower, if only to put that imagery into tension with another image of the anarchist as a day dreaming utopian.[11] Many accounts also proceed quickly to the etymology of the word "anarchy," as interpretations of it still create controversy among anarchists. Here is Marshall's opening paragraph:

> Anarchy is usually defined as a society without government, and anarchism as the social philosophy which aims at its realization. The word "anarchy" comes from the ancient Greek word αναρχια in which αν meant "without" and αρχια meant first a military "leader" then "ruler." … Today it has come to describe the condition of a people living without any constituted authority or government. From the beginning, anarchy has denoted both the negative sense of unruliness which leads to disorder and chaos, and the positive sense of a free society in which rule is no longer necessary.[12]

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[8] Proudhon is credited with being the first to label himself an anarchist, meaning that previous authors like Godwin have been recognized for ideas that resembled what later came to be called anarchist theory. After the late 19th century, when anarchism became associated with violence, as a number of individuals who called themselves anarchists carried out bombings and assassinations, some authors would refuse to label their ideas as "anarchist." Tolstoy, a pacifist, was one of those authors, while Flores Magón did self-identify as anarchist, but felt that it would be best to avoid publicly naming himself and his cohort as such because it might frighten away potential allies.
[9] Marshall, 3-11. Marshall locates Ghandi as one anarchist figure operating in the early to mid-twentieth century, though his charismatic leadership and his stringent stance on some moral questions, among other issues, cause some to question the depth of his commitment to anarchist ideals.
[10] Commentators have been quick to point out, however, that a plurality of ideological positions may coexist within the anti-globalization and Occupy networks. Regarding anti-globalization protestors, for example, journalist Barbara Epstein referred to "anarchist sensibilities" within those groups of activists, rather than identifying them as anarchists per se.
[11] See for example, Nathan Jun, Anarchism and Political Modernity (London: Continuum, 2012), 109-111. In these pages, titled "History of the Bogeyman," Jun discusses the fear of anarchism based on the first stereotype. He confronts charges of utopianism later in the chapter.
[12] Marshall, 3.

Despite the common practice of unpacking the original Greek to look for the meaning of "anarchy," commentators voice some disagreement as to how the phrase "without a leader/ruler" has been and might be interpreted as a foundation for anarchist political philosophy. Nevertheless, most authors identify basic ethical principles upon which anarchism has always been based: freedom from authority and the fundamental equality of all people.

In discussing the anti-authoritarian basis for anarchism, theorists disagree as to what might constitute "authority," some adhering to the notion that "authority" refers to the State or to government more broadly, while others draw on a post-structuralist understanding of power in order to frame a more encompassing concept.[13] Marshall recounts the ways in which classical anarchists defined and distinguished the State from government, before turning to what he terms the more "sophisticated" analysis of the State in more contemporary anarchist political philosophy:

> Gustav Landauer has suggested that "the State is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently." … More recently, Murray Bookchin has argued persuasively that the State is not merely a constellation of bureaucratic and coercive institutions but also a state of mind, "an instilled mentality for ordering reality."[14]

Philosopher Nathan Jun is among those who claim that anarchy means simply "without authority," as well as without a leader or ruler, though he distinguishes between open and closed, coercive authority.[15] He proposes a definition of anarchism that makes explicit the kinds of authority that he believes anarchists object to:

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[13] Several contemporary scholars of anarchism place Michel Foucault among their constellations of anarchist authors, and see anarchism as a post-structuralist political philosophy. Some authors, like Hakim Bey, call this same tendency "post-anarchism." See for example, Gabriel Kuhn, "Anarchism, postmodernity, and poststructuralism" in Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy, ed. Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon, Luis A. Fernandez, Anthony J. Nocella, and Deric Shannon (London: Routledge, 2009), 18-25.
[14] Marshall, 21-22.
[15] Jun summarizes anarchist conceptions of open, transparent authority with closed or opaque authority by presenting the "authority" of a person who holds some form of knowledge that gives her the power to express

> Anarchism is better understood as (a) universal condemnation of and opposition to all forms of closed, coercive authority (political, economic, social, etc.), coupled with (b) universal affirmation and promotion of freedom and equality in all spheres of human existence.[16]

While many classical anarchists like Proudhon were blind to forms of authority such as the authority of men over women, more contemporary understandings of anarchism, like those cited by Marshall and Jun, confront the diverse hierarchies that multiple forms of authority create. Dismantling these hierarchies becomes part of the anti-authoritarian ethics of anarchism, as well as part of its promotion of total equality. In seeking to disturb all hierarchies, including that of the State, anarchists are quick to point out that they do not seek the chaos of absolute freedom for all people, in which everyone may do exactly as she sees fit. The definition of "freedom" and how it may be applied to individuals as well as groups of people is thus one bone of contention among anarchists, some of whom embrace a more individualistic notion of freedom than others.

In fact, if anarchism provokes fears of destruction and even violence through its oppositional politics, the "anti" of its anti-authoritarianism, anarchist conceptions of freedom often ground charges of utopianism. Many anarchists see coercive, hierarchical relationships as the evil that perverts a fundamentally good and cooperative human nature. Peter Marshall voices this perspective in a section of his book titled "Natural Order:"

> A fundamental assumption of anarchism is that nature flourishes best if left to itself. … The same might be said of human beings. It is interfering, dominating rulers who upset the natural harmony and balance of things. It is only when they try to work against the grain, to block the natural flow of energy, that trouble emerges in society. The anarchist confidence in the advantages of freedom, of letting alone, is thus grounded in a kind of cosmic optimism. Without the

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an informed opinion on a topic, which can then be evaluated by others versus the "authority" of authority figures (113-114).

[16] Ibid, 116.

> interference of human beings, natural laws will ensure that spontaneous order will emerge.[17]

Eco-feminists and "natural anarchists" work most directly from this kind of belief, offering animal behaviors and natural processes as models for "restoring" environmentally sound and equitable human interaction.[18]

Some writers on anarchism deny that such essentialist and idealist conceptions of human nature underlie anarchist thought. Jun, for example, claims that even classical anarchists like Bakunin and Kropotkin did not believe in fundamental human goodness, but recognized the ways in which individuals were socially constructed, favoring models of immanence and becoming over stable, essentialist notions.

> The end of morals, Kropotkin insists, "cannot be 'transcendental,' as the idealist desires it to be: it must be real. We must find moral satisfaction in life and not some form of extra-vital condition."… In their place, as Jesse Cohn points out, Kropotkin and other anarchists emphasize life—that is, the immanent and immediate processes of growth, development, and change.[19]

The vital qualities that Jun sees as operative in anarchist thought, from Kropotkin through to Nietzsche, also support contemporary anarchist notions of "affinity," a term that to some extent substitutes for "solidarity" in modern anarchist and social movement theory. The term attempts to capture a less identity-based solidarity among social networks, whose relationships also may be or approximate friendships. Shantz contrasts a "logic of hegemony" to a "logic of affinity" in anarchists' work to replace conventional power relations with more egalitarian ones, quoting political philosopher Richard Day on the ways that "affinity" shapes human interaction:

> This logic of affinity, which includes intersubjective reasoning as one of its modes, also involves typically discounted affects such as passion, strategy, rhetoric and style. … "This mode of shared decision-making in a terrain of undecidability, this kind of community, cannot take the form of a 'Sittlichkeit,' or

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[17] Marshall, 14.
[18] See for example, Pattrice Jones, "Free As A Bird: Natural Anarchism in Action" in Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy, ed. Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon, Luis A. Fernandez, Anthony J. Nocella, and Deric Shannon (London: Routledge, 2009), 236-246.
[19] Jun, 150-151.

> even a multicultural 'civitas.' It cannot, in fact, be a community at all as these are currently conceived. Rather, individuals and groups linked by affinities that are temporary and always shifting…This non-centralized and adaptive form of organization allows for an inclusive movement that is open to a diversity of tactics, perspectives and goals.[20]

Human geography scholar Paul Routledge, meanwhile, talks about the importance of affinity while recalling his participation in the affinity groups that were a hallmark of worldwide anti-globalization organizing.[21]

> Practically, affinity consists of a group of people sharing common ground and who can provide supportive, sympathetic spaces for its members to articulate, listen to one another, and share concerns, emotions, or fears. The politics of affinity enables people to provide support and solidarity for one another. … The idea of consensus here is based upon the notion of "mutual solidarity"—constructing the grievances and aspirations of geographically and culturally diverse people as interlinked.[22]

Despite the ways in which difference is ideally incorporated into and even celebrated in affinity groups, Shantz charges that scholars like Day ignore critics who "offer cautions about the limits of uncritical celebrations of affinity-based lifestyles within contemporary anarchism."[23] While the politics of affinity do not necessarily rely on essentialist notions of inherent human goodness, the reluctance of some anarchists to consider the limits of "affinity" provide further suggestion of the utopianism of anarchist thought, as theorists may gloss over the difficulties of creating affinity among

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[20] Shantz, 40.
[21] Juris discusses affinity groups as part of an "emerging networking logic" rather than through the affective practices of affinity that Routledge and others underscore in their accounts. Here he describes the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999: "The overall action strategy involved nonviolent civil disobedience, including blockades and lockdowns, consensus-based decision making, and an affinity group structure based on small, autonomous groups of five to fifteen anarchists, which formed larger clusters and organized via spokescouncil meetings." He comments on the interactions of these groups: "The way they interacted on the streets mirrored how alternative movements and struggles would converge within transnational networks, as new technologies and emerging networking logics allowed activists to organize across distance, diversity, and difference." Jeffrey Juris, Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalization (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 33.
[22] Paul Routledge, "Toward a relational ethics of struggle" in Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy, ed. Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon, Luis A. Fernandez, Anthony J. Nocella, and Deric Shannon (London: Routledge, 2009), 84-85. Routledge participated in one of fifteen "rebel clown affinity groups" in protesting the G8 meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland in July, 2005.
[23] Shantz, 41.

people with various differences, or fail to discuss precisely how affinity might be created and maintained.

Not all writers on anarchism would wish to disavow utopianism, however. Some anarchists willingly embrace it, pointing out that models of utopia allow anarchists to imagine what alternative realities they work for.

> As long as there are no actual anarchist countries to look at and learn from, they are restricted to producing and discussing thought-experiments, theories, and depictions of working anarchy in addition to building small-scale anarchist communities and affinity groups to test their assumptions of how it is possible to live and act together freely, and of how to make decisions and solve conflicts without (even informal) hierarchies. In short: anarchists need utopias.[24]

Others, like Jun, define utopia as a kind of blueprint for a future society. Thus, he denies the utopianism of anarchism through the argument that anarchists do not attempt to carry out any particular vision, but instead, base their politics on experimentation.[25] He elaborates on this idea:

> Anarchist praxis, though guided by certain theoretical and tactical commitments, does not proceed according to concrete blueprints. Rather, it seeks to create forms of organization that, instead of representing social relationships, are immanent to those relationships themselves. … What forms of organization can accomplish this? How can we bring them about? Such questions can only be answered by activism, by practice, by experimenting with new ways of being and living, both individually and communally.[26]

Anthropologist Jeffrey Juris reaches similar conclusions about the importance of experimenting with new forms of technology and networking as a means to generate "new political visions, cultural grammars, and collaborative practices," part of a "rise of

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[24] Peter Seyferth, "Anarchism and utopia" in Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy, ed. Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon, Luis A. Fernandez, Anthony J. Nocella, and Deric Shannon (London: Routledge, 2009), 282. Seyferth, a political scientist, points out that there have been stateless indigenous societies that seem to have functioned through anarchist principles, citing Mexico's Zapatistas as a recent example. Nevertheless, he points out that these instances of anarchism too exist as models or examples rather than concrete opportunities in which most people can practice their anarchism. See page 312, note 4.
[25] Jun, 141.
[26] Ibid, 143.

informational utopics."[27] Drawing on Foucault, Shantz sees anarchist experimentation as engaging with the French philosopher's "heterotopia," "other spaces" or "counter-sites" in which people attempt to create "effectively enacted utopia" in real time and space.[28] He comments:

> Directing their energies to the enormous tasks of transforming everyday life through alternative social arrangements and organizations they refuse to wait either for elite-initiated reforms or for future "post-revolutionary" utopias. In order to bring their ideas to life anarchists develop working examples of future worlds or "futures in the present." It is through the living examples of these "futures-present" that they attempt to "form the structure of the new world in the shell of the old."[29]

My collaborators in the punk scene who disparaged others' anarchism often did so based on the charge that their involvement was superficial, that they engaged only in anarchist theory without entering into these kinds of everyday activities, or that their manner of participating was piecemeal instead of immersive. In the next section, I will explore the ways in which anarchists' anti-authoritarian and radically egalitarian ethics may be attempted through experimentation with everyday practices, including the musical ones that provide the baseline for participation in Mexico City's punk scene.

9.2 From Direct Action to "Transfer Cultures": Experiments in Anarchy

According to Proudhon's much-quoted adage, "anarchy is order." Anarchist experimentation attempts to concretize this idea, seeking new forms of order through de-centralized, non-hierarchical inter-personal relationships, social structures, and processes.

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[27] Juris, 284. "The Rise of Informational Utopics" forms one chapter of Networking Futures, 267-286. I will return to Juris's ethnography later in the chapter to revisit "affinity."
[28] Shantz, 136.
[29] Ibid.

Direct action is one re-ordering idea that has acquired a high profile in recent decades through its adoption by protest groups, from the explicitly non-violent, civil disobedience of Civil Rights activists in the 1960s to the dramatic, highly performative mass direct actions organized by anti-globalization networks around the turn of the twenty-first century. Political scientist April Carter traces the history of direct action in Europe and North America, noting that practices of direct action were initially associated with anarcho-syndicalist labor disputes in the early twentieth century, encompassing mass acts such as strikes and boycotts.[30] She contrasts these anarcho-syndicalist strategies with the actions of a few, isolated individuals who carried out acts of sabotage or violence in the name of anarchism, seeing the mass actions as examples of direct action while characterizing bombings and assassinations as "guerrilla tactics." In the 1950s and 60s, Civil Rights and anti-war protestors, inspired by Ghandian civil disobedience, adopted direct action on a large scale, engaging in activities as diverse as sit-ins, freedom rides, the burning of draft cards, picketing, and other forms of obstructionism. Protestors were explicitly non-violent, to the extent that those who were subject to police brutality would not strike back at their aggressors.[31] In the late 1960s, some militant activists rejected non-violent tactics, "and linked direct action rhetorically to revolutionary violence as a badge of militancy."[32]

Again, Carter distinguishes between direct action and guerrilla tactics, but notes that in the 1970s and beyond, the line between non-violence and coercion in the context

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[30] April Carter, Direct Action and Democracy Today (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), 3-9. Carter focuses on the twentieth century in her history of direct action, but notes that there are many examples of direct action-style protests notated in history before the last century.
[31] For firsthand accounts of non-violent activism and training, see Freedom Riders, dir. Stanley Nelson (Firelight Films for PBS American Experience, 2011) 1 hour, 53 minutes, accessed online at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/freedomriders/, 23 January, 2013.
[32] Carter, 6. She further distinguishes between the rhetorical linking of direct action and violence, as well as the use of property destruction in the context of some student movement protests in the late 1960s, and the guerrilla tactics of militant groups like the Weatherpeople or the Baader-Meinhof group.

of direct action has become blurred.[33] She cites the tactics of Australian environmental activists in the 1990s, for example, who suspended themselves from tripods and scaffolding poles that they built in the midst of a rainforest. Authorities could not remove the structures without the threat of harming the peaceful activists. Such tactics have circulated transnationally among the "new social movements" in the decades following the 1960s.

In addition to direct actions that she labels as "obstructionist" forms of resistance, Carter also calls attention to the "constructive" aspects of some forms of direct action.

> Constructive policies or organizations arise partly from the logic of protest. Lengthy strikes require unions and supporters to provide un-official forms of welfare, and boycotts suggest the need for alternative goods or services that symbolize also the aims of the struggle. Occupying factories often leads to attempts by workers to run them. Occupying lands also often results either in small-scale productivity, as when Thai peasants start growing vegetables on golf courses they have seized, or in setting up new farms and communities in Brazil. Sometimes creating alternative services is itself a form of resistance and a means of furthering ultimate aims...[34]

Juris also draws attention to both spectacular and mundane forms that direct action took within anti-globalization organizations beginning in the late 1990s, in which participants engaged in huge demonstrations that were essentially mass direct actions, but also used something akin to Carter's "logic of protest" in the process of coordinating demonstrations among diverse groups of protestors. Juris remarks that in fact, the more colloquial forms of direct action that anti-globalization activists employed in their networking strategies are more durable, sustainable forms of direct action than mass demonstrations.

> Mass direct actions are complex performative terrains that produce a dual effect. Externally, they are powerful image events (DeLuca 1999), where diverse activist

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[33] Carter analyzes the rise of coercive tactics in the context of communicational strategies that allowed geographically distant groups to share ideas, as well as the shifting tactics for responding to mass protest on the part of liberal democratic state authorities.
[34] Ibid, 5.

> networks communicate their messages to an audience by "hijacking" the global media space afforded by multilateral summits (Peterson 2001). Internally, they constitute platforms where alternative subjectivities are expressed through distinct bodily and spatial techniques, and emotions are generated through ritual conflict. At the same time, direct-action strategies involving horizontal coordination among autonomous groups and the division of space among distinct protest styles reproduce emerging network norms and forms on the tactical plane.[35]

In his ethnography, Juris recounts his experience taking part in activist organizations like the People's Global Action network and participating in events like the World Social Forum (Brazil, 2001), documenting the role that non-hierarchical organization played in their everyday dynamics. Turning his attention to these more colloquial examples of direct action, Juris focuses on aspects like outreach and training, consensus-based decision making, and mutual aid. He, like David Graeber in a similar ethnography of direct action among activist networks, takes painstaking care to describe his interlocutors' complex negotiations as they forged agreements about how to express and enact their politics, working collectively in spite of various differences and geographical distance.[36] Through detailed descriptions of various consensus-based decision-making processes, to ruminations on the importance of creating spaces that reflect a networking logic, to accounts of the tactics of different types of protestors during some of the major anti-globalization demonstrations in Europe and North America, Juris paints a vivid picture of the difficulties and rewards of these more everyday forms of direct action. Ultimately, he contends that while specific networking projects may be more successful than others, it is the working through of the processes themselves that is most significant, concluding that "debates about social movement networks largely <u>constitute</u> social movement networks themselves."[37] Direct action thus

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[35] Juris, 124.
[36] See David Graeber, Direct Action: An Ethnography (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009).
[37] Juris, 298. Emphasis in original.

plays a major role in the creation and maintenance of the emerging networking logic that Juris and others trace in the context of recent anarchism-inspired social movements.

While Juris is keen to emphasize the procedural aspects of direct action as key to social movement organizing in the context of anti-globalization protest, Shantz looks at the ways in which everyday tactics defy expectations regarding the form and function of contemporary social movements more broadly.

> The key principles of contemporary movements that I identify and examine in the following sections of this work are affinity-based organizing, self-valorization, as discussed in autonomist Marxism, and do-it-yourself (DIY) politics, as developed in anarchist and punk movements. Taken together these aspects of movement practice express a striving for autonomy and self-determination rather than a politics of dissent or demand.[38]

Shantz characterizes most social movement theory as being still grounded in a "Keynesian social citizenship state" rather than the "neoliberal crisis state" in which, he posits, social movements actually operate today. In the early twentieth century, social movements in advanced capitalist nations focused on demanding equal rights from the state through "statist or reformist or integrative movements and strategies," which inherently validated the State, asking for its protection.

> Mainstream social movement theories give attention to structures, organizations, and practices that are relatively effective for making such rights-based demands upon states or for gaining recognition or legitimacy for marginalized or "excluded" identities. All of this reflects the priorities of state-centric or integrationist politics or what has been called a politics of demand.[39]

[38] Shantz, 30.
[39] Ibid, 33-34.

As opposed to a Keynesian state operating through the "Fordist organization of the social factory," however, Shantz argues that modern neoliberal nations are defined by crisis:

> Recent transformations to bring the state more in line with the needs of global capital have led to the emergence of the Crisis State which claims to be feeble in the face of global forces while flexing its muscles against the poor and disadvantaged. Ruling elites have been hard at work removing reforms won from capital, through great struggles, over the past century. … Rather than offering a "safety net" or some manner of "social security," these policies create various crises within the working classes of Western industrial nations, crises which undermine attempts to expand demands for services or to resist transformations which favour capital.[40]

Faced with the realities of neoliberalism, modern-day social movements often find themselves without the resources with which to demand access to the receding protections of the State. The context of the crisis state has thus encouraged social movements to turn from enacting a politics of demand to a politics of autonomy. Anarchist or anarchism-inspired social movements engaging in a politics of autonomy "neither ask for gifts from the state (as in the liberal democratic new social movements) nor seek state power themselves (as in classical Marxism)."[41]

One emblematic example of an embrace of political autonomy is the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico, which continues after more than a decade of experimentation with new forms of revolution, beyond the seizure of state power. The Zapatistas have demonstrated a number of alternative self-governing methods, rejecting vanguardism and favoring horizontal over hierarchical relationships, providing a model of autonomous community building that has inspired activists the world over. Many credit the example of the Zapatistas with stimulating the global networks of anti-

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[40] Ibid, 35.
[41] Ibid, 37.

corporate globalization protestors that emerged in the decade after their initial uprising.[42]

With the ascendancy of a politics of autonomy comes the need for alternative forms of organizing, distinguishing autonomous social movements from social movements that engage in oppositional politics in order to win some kind of recognition from the state. Richard Day sees the social forms that arise from organizing "coming communities," as portents of social groups of the future, which will resist the universalizing trend of a global civil society.[43] Similarly, Howard Erlich sees modern-day autonomous communities in the light of their potential to transform social relations, referring to them as "transfer cultures," "an approximation of the new society within the context of the old."

> A transfer culture is that agglomeration of ideas and practices that guide people in making the trip from the society here to the society there in the future. … As part of the accepted wisdom of that transfer culture we understand that we may never achieve anything that goes beyond the culture itself. It may be, in fact, that it is the very nature of anarchy that we shall always be building the new society within whatever society we find ourselves. But anarchists recognize that it is the process of change that is critical.[44]

Erlich points to specific practices that transfer cultures may engage in, from squatting to dumpster diving to independent media projects, practices that put transfer cultures on the margins, and thus on the potentially transformative liminal zones of mainstream society. Shantz comments:

> … [anarchist transfer cultures] are important sites of reskilling, in which anarchists prepare themselves for the new forms of relationship necessary to break authoritarian and hierarchical structures. Participants also learn the diverse tasks and varied interpersonal skills necessary for collective work and living. This skill sharing serves to discourage the emergence of knowledge elites

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[42] In addition to the ways in which Zapatista tactics inspired activists around the world, a number of activists who participated in the anti-globalization movement had also taken part in solidarity activities with the Zapatistas, including international encuentros that took place in Chiapas. See Juris, 321, note 19.
[43] Richard Day, "Ethics, Affinity and the Coming Communities" in Philosophy and Social Criticism, vol. 27, no. 21 (2001), 35.
[44] Howard Erlich, "Introduction to Reinventing Anarchist Tactics" in Reinventing Anarchy, Again, ed. Howard J. Erlich (San Francisco: AK Press, 1996), 329.

> and to allow for the sharing of all tasks, even the least desirable, necessary for social maintenance.[45]

In addition to the ways in which participants in transfer cultures learn skills that contribute to the self-reliance of autonomous communities, many anarchists also look to federation between autonomous communities as a method of broad decentralized organization, imagined as a potential alternative to the nation-state.

In spite of such optimistic assessments of "transfer cultures" as the latest revolutionary project, strong criticisms have also surfaced within the anarchist community. Most notably, Murray Bookchin, a well-known anarchist political philosopher, published a scathing commentary of "autonomous" practices, which he contemptuously termed "lifestyle anarchism."[46] A lightening rod for controversy, the essay distinguished between "social anarchism," the ideological offspring of early twentieth-century anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-communism—forms of anarchism committed to a class-based solidarity and direct confrontation with powerful hierarchies—and what Bookchin saw as the overly individualistic anarchisms popular at the time of his writing, such as mystical anarchism and neo-primitivism. While arguably, anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-communism had downplayed the freedoms of the individual in favor of collective freedoms, Bookchin claimed that the modern, individualist anarchisms were overly concerned with individual freedoms, leading to a decadent form of anarchism that resulted not in revolutionary change, but only in elitist subculture.[47]

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[45] Shantz, 17.
[46] Murray Bookchin, Social Anarchism Versus Lifestyle Anarchism: An UnBridgeable Chasm (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 1995).
[47] In an introduction to the essay, Bookchin writes, "Unless I amgravely mistaken—as I hope I am—the revolutionary and social goals of anarchism are suffering far-reaching erosion to a point where the word anarchy will become part of the chic bourgeois vocabulary of the coming century—naughty, rebellious, insouciant, but deliciously safe" (3).

He reserved special scorn for "Hakim Bey," the pseudonymically-identified author of a text that had become something of an underground hit, T.A.Z.: the temporary autonomous zone, ontological anarchy, poetic terrorism, which was reprinted in numerous independent publications and also performed as poetry in at least two locations.[48] T.A.Z. not only begins with an ode to chaos, but also derides the worthiness of "revolution," two points that—if taken quite seriously—challenge the work that anarchists have traditionally focused on: countering the idea that anarchy is chaos and that social change is possible without compromise with existing authorities.[49]

In the 1960s, however, Bookchin had championed the counterculture and its "lifestyle"-oriented cultural politics.[50] In fact, some critics see his later work as a breathtaking about-face, a disavowal of the discourse that he had had an important hand in shaping. In particular, his detractors claim that he had forgotten the significance of the maxim, "the personal is the political," which shaped so many social justice struggles from the 1960s forward. Significantly, despite the vigorous defense of "lifestyle anarchism" penned by many authors, the argument that Bookchin's 1995 work touched off among anarchists has continued through the present day.[51]

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[48] Hakim Bey, T.A.Z.: the temporary autonomous zone, ontological anarchy, poetic terrorism (New York: Autonomedia, 1991). For a partial account of the book's publication and performance history, see "Acknowledgements," vii-viii.

[49] Invested in the importance of aesthetic theory and imagination, Bey contrasts his examples of Temporary Autonomous Zones as lacking the "seriousness of the free Ukraine or Barcelona." The aesthetic nature of Bey's work is underscored by the fact that Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs both provided prominent commentary on the book on its back cover.

[50] In "Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism," however, Bookchin distinguishes between the counterculture of the early 1960s from that of the later 60s. He writes, "For all its shortcomings, the anarchic counterculture during the early part of the hectic 1960s was often intensely political and cast expressions like desire and ecstasy in eminently social terms, often deriding the personalistic tendencies of the later Woodstock generation. The transformation of the 'youth culture,' as it was originally called, from the birth of the civil rights and peace movements to Woodstock and Altamont, with its emphasis on a purely self-indulgent form of 'pleasure,' is reflected in Dylan's devolution from 'Blowin' in the Wind' to 'Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands'" (9).

[51] See for example, Laurence Davis, "Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unhelpful Dichotomy" in Anarchist Studies, vol. 18, no. 1 (2010), 63. In another article, Stuart White proposes Colin Ward's work as an antidote to Bookchin's dichotomy, characterizing it as a pragmatic, non-utopian form of anarchism that resolves the differences between the two approaches. White, "Social anarchism, lifestyle anarchism, and the anarchism of Colin Ward," in Anarchist Studies, vol. 19, no. 2 (2011). Shantz (2011) also takes care to voice his opposition to Bookchin in a section of Active Anarchy dedicated to the topic. Tellingly, in subsequent sections, however, he reveals some anxiety about his conclusions, writing several statements like the

Indeed, it is possible to view some of the factionalism in Mexico City's punk scene, and between city punks and anarchists, as a living example of just this kind of controversy. What do Mexico City's punks mean when they say that they are anarchists? Anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-communism are two forms of anarchism that have traditionally been quite strong in Latin American countries, especially Mexico.[52] And yet, what Bookchin terms a "lifestyle anarchism," understood as something potentially akin to counterculture, also has played an important role in Mexican youth culture and politics in recent decades.

As I intimated in the first chapter, I don't believe—as some of my friends in Mexico City's punk scene do—that punk is a social movement. In recent years, social movement theorists have better incorporated direct action strategies into their understanding of what contemporary social movements are, encompassing diverse organizations formed through various practices, for a range of purposes. Nevertheless, I am not persuaded that networks of people performing direct actions and experimenting with direct democracy in themselves create social movements. In making that statement, I want to clarify that I see social movements and "transfer cultures" as two different, if interrelated types of social networks. I readily concede that each may contribute to social and political change, with potentially overlapping memberships and directly democratic methods, but on the whole, I believe that they provide two distinct models of organization and goals.[53]

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following: "…the absence of durable anarchist organizations, rooted in working class organizations and communities, still contributes to demoralization or a retreat into subculturalism" (146).

[52] See Alfredo Gómez-Muller, Anarquismo y anarcosyndicalismo en América Latina: Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, México (Medellín: La Carreta, 2009).

[53] The importance of distinguishing between the two may well be illustrated by recent controversy generated by Occupy groups in the United States. The encampments provided spaces in which participants could experiment with creating new social models through a largely grassroots organization, modeling consensus-based decision making structures and other "non-hierarchical" procedures among occupiers. And yet, the repeated demands from commentators beyond Occupy that its participants explain their goals reveal the

While I reject the notion that the punk scene is a social movement, I am interested in the ways in which a study of Mexico City's punk scene, directly enmeshed in a more "countercultural" than "social movement" type of network, provides a site for the discussion of networking logics, as well as a comparison of autonomous versus oppositional politics. Additionally, I think that the decades-long discourse on "youth culture" and "music scenes" has much to offer those who continue to tangle anxiously with the implications of Bookchin's decadent "lifestyle anarchism," as well as those who theorize the political aspirations of "transfer cultures."

In what follows, I turn again to José Agustín, the cultural critic who theorized "la banda" and its place in a Mexican counterculture.[54] In the context of Agustín's countercultural "banda," participants in the punk scene enact the autonomous politics of a "lifestyle anarchism" through the maintenance of independent networks of exchange and "autogestión," functioning in some ways as a kind of "transfer culture." However, the importance of anarcho-syndicalist and anarcho-communist traditions in Mexico City political history remains a strong influence. Members of the punk scene continue to be shaped by an oppositional stance informed by these types of "social anarchism" as well. How, then, do an oppositional and an autonomous politics combine to create a specifically punk form of solidarity in Mexico City's scene?

In these endeavors, I do not seek to bridge Bookchin's chasm, as Richard Day claims to do through his theorization of the role of affect and affinity in the "post-

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tensions that this form of social networking may create. How do "autonomous" networks speak to a "mainstream" culture? The groups' later efforts to articulate positions that would appeal to a broader swathe of the population—such as the notion that they represented the 99% of people who did not benefit from the government's preferential treatment of the super-rich—attempted to satisfy expectations of a social movement's oppositionality, but without expressing any particular routes through which to address the inherent complaint.

[54] José Agustín, La Contracultura en México (México, D.F.: Random House Mondadori, 1991).

anarchist" "coming communities."[55] Instead, I am interested in the ways that countercultures encompass networks of individuals who may also participate in groups that more precisely resemble social movements, recalling Agustín's history of "la onda" and its origins in both the student movement and "jipiteca" culture.[56] I imagine the punk scene as one network among a system of overlapping social networks that encompasses "la banda," as well as federations of anarchist collectives, friendship circles, small "affinity groups," and more. The participation of women in Mexico City's punk scene makes it particularly clear that individuals may be part of countercultural, lifestyle-oriented social networks while also interfacing with other social networks, including social movement organizations.

Among the various relational choices represented by these coterminous networks, affective practices—from street sing-alongs to participation in the slam dance to the creation of festivals and events—serve as strategies for creating and maintaining friendships, as well as attempts at forging a broader, class-based solidarity. Musical performance strongly informs these affective practices, and I will argue, also plays an important role in shaping punks' particular mixture of oppositional and autonomous politics. In the next section, I explore the role of anarchism in Mexican social and political history, and evaluate how various "social" and "lifestyle" anarchisms have combined to inform notions of solidarity among "la banda punk."

9.3 Anarchism(s) in Mexico

Historians relate that anarchism became a force within Mexico, both in urban and rural communities, in the late 19th century, partly due to an influx of European

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[55] Richard J. F. Day, "The bridgeable chasm" in Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005), 159-171.
[56] Agustín, 82-90.

expatriates from across the Continent, especially Spain.[57] Conditions in Mexico were fertile ground for anarchist "sembradores" in the latter decades of the 1800s. In addition to the country's increasing industrialization, which impacted workers flowing into the cities to take manufacturing jobs, Mexico also experienced a great deal of turmoil in the countryside, prompted by land redistribution laws enacted in the 1850s. This liberal legislation attempted to wrest power from military, clerical, and landed elites in order to foster the development of private enterprise, including small agricultural landholdings. While the clergy did lose a great deal of power and land in this Reforma period, the military and the "hacendados" largely held on to theirs, while in the cities, an urban bourgeoisie came into being. Agrarian uprisings began to occur in the 1850s and continued through the period of the Mexican Revolution. Simultaneously, in the cities, workers began to protest the poor conditions and low wages they encountered in industrial work.

Mexican anarchism thus developed along two parallel trajectories during the final decades of the 19th century, evolving into an anarcho-communist tradition in the rural territories and an anarcho-syndicalism in the cities. An early European expatriate, Plotino Rhodakanaty, observed that Mexican "campesinos" already lived by collectivist ideals espoused by European anarchists like Fourier and Proudhon.[58] Hart writes:

> Much of the agrarian movement came to rationalize the needs of Mexico's "campesinos" in terms formulated by that staunch defender of the mores of the French peasantry, Proudhon. The urban labor movement, although originally

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[57] See for example, Clara E. Lida and Carlos Illades, "El anarquismo europeo y sus primeras influencias en México después de la Comuna de París 1871-1881" in Historia Mexicana, vol. 51, no. 1 (July-September 2001), 103-149. See also John M. Hart, "The Origins of Mexican Anarchism" in Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class, 1860-1931 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978). Like Marxism, anarchism as a political philosophy was largely developed in Europe, from whence it spread to other parts of the world, including Latin America and the United States. Among her reasons for the decline of anarchism in the United States in the early twentieth century, Barbara Epstein reminds readers that most of the anarchists who operated in the labor movement were European immigrants, who were either deported or assimilated to mainstream American life during that time. See Epstein, 4.
[58] Hart, 20.

> conceived along Proudhonist-mutualist lines, from the very beginning adopted Bakunin's secret society as a tactic of organization.[59]

In agricultural communities, "campesinos" emphasized the importance of anarchist ideals like direct democracy and the abolition of private property, with the means of production in particular held communally between all producers. Meanwhile, in the cities, industrial laborers worked towards similar ideals of direct democracy and worker management, with the ultimate goal being the abolition of the wage system.[60] In the absence of the collectivist practices that shaped everyday rural and village life, urban anarcho-syndicalists emphasized the role of solidarity along class lines as an important organizing principle. Despite adherence to some different ideological roots and tactics, there was an increasing coordination between anarcho-syndicalist urban labor organizers and anarcho-communist agrarian communities, in addition to more sophisticated communication between anarchists in Europe and Mexico as time went on.[61] In addition to a number of agrarian uprisings, anarcho-syndalists led worker strikes and boycotts in the urban environment in the last decades of the nineteenth century, especially in Mexico City.

It was around the turn of the century that Mexico's most famous homegrown anarchist, Ricardo Flores Magón, first earned a name for himself, helping to instigate the overthrow of Mexico's dictator, Porfirio Díaz, especially through his writings in Regeneración. In addition to advocating for the removal of Díaz, Flores Magón and the Partido Liberal Mexicano had been instrumental in attracting peasant laborers as well as

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59 Ibid, 29.

60 These two types of anarchism have clear affinities with Marxist thought, particularly in regard to the diagnoses of capital's ills. For more on the entanglements of anarcho-syndicalism and Marxism during the time of the First and Second International, see Anna Ribera Carbó, La Casa del Obrero Mundial: Anarcosyndicalismo y la Revolución en México (México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2010), 15-18. For the development of anarcho-communism in Mexico at that same time period, see Lida and Illades.

61 Lida and Illades. For anarchism in Latin America after 1900, see also David Viñas, Anarquistas en América Latina (Buenos Aires: Paradiso, 2004), 15-46.

industrial workers to the revolutionary cause.[62] But while the armies of Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa continued to operate under the banner of the "land and liberty" anarchism that Flores Magón championed, urban workers began to organize independently of the PLM after the establishment of the Madero administration in 1911.[63] As the influence of the exiled Flores Magón and the PLM waned among urban workers in the later stages of the revolutionary period, and an increasing partnership grew between organizations like the anarcho-syndicalist Casa del Obrero Mundial and the Constitutionalist administrations, urban workers became detached from agrarian struggles.[64] Ultimately, workers affiliated with the Casa del Obrero Mundial were recruited by the Carranza administration to help fight against Villa and Zapata's armies, forming the so-called "red battalions" in 1915.[65]

In addition to the pact that the anarcho-syndicalists made with the Constitutionalists, these latter were able to calm the country's agrarian population with the promise of a new constitution that would address land reform.[66] The Constitutionalist government also increasingly co-opted labor programs in the consolidation of their "revolutionary" administration. Despite its weakened condition, the Casa del Obrero Mundial called for a general strike in the summer of 1916, protesting the declining standards of living for industrial workers under the Carranza

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[62] Hart writes: "The PLM represented more than a mere precursor of the Mexican Revolution, however. A leading element in the early stages of the revolution, it continued to be important until after Madero's victory in 1911. The significant difference between the PLM, the Madero-led revolutionaries, and the Constitutionalist movement of Venustiano Carranza that succeeded Madero was that the PLM represented a workers-peasant revolution" (102).
[63] One important exception is the Casa del Obrero Mundial (The International Worker House), which was founded by some former PLM members in Mexico City in 1912, affiliated with the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World). In later years, resentment against the exiled members of the PLM, including Flores Magón, prevented their continuing influence on the anarcho-syndicalists.
[64] Hart writes that the anarcho-syndicalists had come to believe that their organization showed the way forward for Mexican workers, while they believed that Zapata and Villa's peasant armies fought for "la reacción," a return to the values of the past. Anarcho-syndicalists particularly distrusted the religiosity of Zapata's troops, who often marched displaying images of the Virgen de Guadalupe, but they also felt a sense of superiority to the "campesinos" due to their urbanity (131).
[65] For more on the "batallones rojos" organized by the Casa del Obrero Mundial, see Rivera Carbó, 137-150.
[66] Despite these promises, however, land reform was not carried out in an evenhanded manner across the republic.

regime. The government put down the strike and arrested the most prominent leaders of the Casa, executing one of them. In the years that followed, the government created legislation to combat labor disputes, further weakening the independence of organized labor. Writing in the early 1970s, Hart commented:

> In the years since [the revolution], the active reformism of the Obregón, Calles, and Lázaro Cárdenas regimes has relegated Mexican anarchism to a historical legacy, and the largest agrarian and urban labor organizations are controlled by the national government.[67]

The Constitutionalist government, which coalesced over time into the all-powerful PRI party, constructed itself as the bearer of permanent revolution, the institutionalized revolution of the State.[68] Syndicalism continued to flourish in Mexico, though through two quite different means—through the "official" labor unions, upon which the PRI conferred a variety of financial and political benefits, and the "independent" labor unions, which resisted state encroachment on labor rights. Independent labor unions experienced difficult relations with the PRI, which led to their violent repression in the 1940s and 50s.[69] Artists also organized through syndicalism in the immediate post-revolutionary period, and participated in the creation of a myth of the revolution, downplaying the disunity that emerged after 1910, and especially by emphasizing the patriotism of the "heroes" of the Revolution, including Zapata, Villa,

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[67] Hart, 183. Hodges, writing in the 1990s, has a different perspective on a resurgence of Mexican anarchism in the late 1960s: "After the lapse of a half century during which anarchist theorizing virtually disappeared from the Mexican scene and Marxism replaced it as the core ideology among radicalized workers, a renewed interest in anarchism occurred in the wake of the guerilla resurgence and student rebellion of the late 1960s. See Hodges, 147.

[68] While the final stages of the Mexican Revolution, and the "institutionalized revolution" that followed recall Marxism in various ways, the Mexican government did not embrace Marxism, claiming that their revolution was unique to the Mexican nation and did not rely on "exotic doctrines." Nationalism was more of a buttress for the revolutionary claims of the Mexican state than Marxism was. See Ilene V. O'Malley, The Myth of the Revolution: Hero Cults and the Institutionalization of the Mexican State, 1920-1940 (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 3-18.

[69] For a history of state-labor relations after the revolution and particularly after the removal of the PRI from power in 2000, see Jean-François Mayer, "Changes in Relations Between the State and Independent Unions?: Mexico Under the Fox Presidency" in Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies, vol. 31, no. 61 (2006), 9-35.

Flores Magón, and others who had actually been persecuted or assassinated during its course.[70]

Focusing on the post-revolutionary period, historian Donald Hodges summarizes the position of anarchists after the revolution:

> Anarchist organizations were stamped out during the first two decades of the Revolution or otherwise fizzled from lack of popular resonance. Former members who tried to be consequential had two main options: they could line up with the PCM, or they could pursue a strategy independent of the party.[71]

Hodges thus traces the underground survival of anarchism beneath the umbrella of the Mexican Communist Party and in a handful of popular uprisings that took place in the ensuing decades.[72] But it was during the 1960s when anarchism, and particularly the anarchism of Flores Magón, experienced a real resurgence in Mexico. Hodges points to the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 that brought a turning point:

> While the struggle on the Cuban beach was still in progress, some fifteen thousand Mexican students marched toward the central plaza in Mexico City to express their solidarity with the Cuban people. Suddenly tear gas and police truncheons fell on the demonstrators. Repressive Mexico versus socialist Cuba—that image was engraved on the students' minds.[73]

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[70] Artisans had long been important to the tradition of anarcho-syndicalism in Mexico City, especially in the founding of the Casa del Obrero Mundial. See for example, Ribera Carbó and also Hart. Additionally, there is excellent art historical work on artists' participation in the consolidation of the "revolutionary state." See Mary K. Coffey, How a Revolution Became Official Culture: Murals, Museums, and the Mexican State (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012). While Mexican muralists like Rivera, Orozco, Tamayo, Siqueiros, and others became famous internationally as creators of post-revolutionary "official culture," the graphic arts were also an important medium for artists' political expression. Illustrators and printmakers, affiliated through the Taller de Gráfica Popular, an artists' workshop that formed from origins in the Sindicato de Trabajadores Técnicos, Pintores y Escultores. Many of the artists in the TGP were also members of the Communist Party in its early years. The iconic style of the Taller's key artists, like Leopoldo Méndez, survives to this day in contemporary Mexican visual culture. Even in the punk scene, it is possible to find reproductions of images created by TGP artists, mixed with images sourced from various other graphic traditions, like Spanish Civil War propaganda, international punk fanzines, the skull-and-crossbones imagery of death metal, and more. For an illustrated history of the TGP, see Helga Prignitz, El Taller de Gráfica Popular en México, 1937-1977 (México, D.F.: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1992).
[71] Hodges, 3. For a more detailed account of the union of Marxist and anarchist traditions in the formation of the Partido Comunista Mexicano, see Barry Carr, "Marxism and Anarchism in the Formation of the Mexican Communist Party, 1910-19" in The Hispanic American Historical Review, vol. 63, no. 2 (May, 1983), 277-305.
[72] One important source of anarchist intervention in Mexico that Hodges doesn't mention was the arrival of Spanish exiles from the Civil War during the 1930s, whose impact on the punk scene I discussed in a previous section.
[73] Hodges, 111.

In addition to the influence of the Cuban Revolution, students were furious that the government continued to imprison two key labor union organizers, Valentín Campa and Demetrio Vallejo, who had been detained during the railway strike of 1958-59, part of a series of events that robbed a great deal of the power of Mexico's independent labor movement.

The student movement began to coalesce around these issues during the 1960s, fueled also by criticisms of the Mexican Communist Party and a newfound interest in anarchism, propagated by well-known figures like José Revueltas, a member of the Communist Party who also helped to revive interest in the legacy of Flores Magón.[74] As they had during the founding of the Mexican Communist Party, Marxism and anarchism mingled in the theories of numerous writers who reinvigorated anarchism, largely in the service of "re-creating" a Marxism better suited to the realities of Latin American economics and politics.[75]

In the student movement, various types of leftist students put this mixture of Marxist and anarchist ideals into practice. Though the student movement questioned the legitimacy of the ruling PRI government, many students were essentially reformists who believed in the principles of the 1917 Constitution. There was also a more radical leftist current within the movement, however. Those students demonstrated an interest in a new revolution, marching with images of figures as diverse as Lenin, Che Guevara, and Mao, as well as Emiliano Zapata and Demetrio Vallejo, among others.[76] Over the summer of 1968, students staged strikes and demonstrations, responding to increasing repression by police, military, and riot troops. Small groups of radical students called "brigadistas" modeled their tactics on the May Revolution in Paris, though Hodges

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[74] In 1962, Revueltas published a landmark essay that critiqued Mexican Marxism and championed Flores Magón not as a forerunner of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, but of a proletarian revolution yet to come. See José Revueltas, Ensayo sobre un proletariado sin cabeza (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1980).
[75] Hodges discusses various currents and authors from the 1960s forward, 147-179.
[76] Ibid, 113.

believes that "the student rebellion in Mexico was less influenced by French events than by the escalation of domestic repression":[77]

> Ultraleftist students engaged in fistfights with students loyal to the government, threw rocks and Molotov cocktails at the police and riot-control troops, traveled in requisitioned buses distributing mimeographed sheets full of denunciations, attended flash meetings in industrial zones and poor neighborhoods, took most of the beatings and suffered most of the casualties. They stoned the windows of the Secretariat of the Interior on 19 September, provoked and battled the "granaderos" on 20 and 21 September, erected barricades of overturned vehicles in a confrontation with the army on 22 September, and burned buses and engaged in a shoot-out with police that resulted in twenty dead and hundreds wounded on 23 September. Arrested by the hundreds, they were charged with robbery, damage to property, and homicide. The actions of this sector became the pretext for the 2 October massacre in the Plaza of Three Cultures.[78]

The student movement limped along in the years following the massacre in 1968, suffering a final blow after the Corpus Christi massacre in 1971, which Revueltas characterized as simply a repeat of 1968, but under slightly different conditions.[79] Some of the militants from the student movement then created urban guerilla groups that carried out assaults, robberies, and other aggressive actions in Mexico City and various other cities across Mexico during the 1970s.[80] Other students engaged in community organizing in the aftermath of the massacres, often opting to leave the city for the countryside.[81] Hodges comments:

> Taking a long view, Revueltas concluded that Bloody Thursday, like Tlatelolco, signified a defeat rather than a victory for the ruling party. Its lasting effect was to have raised the students' collective consciousness and commitment to freedom from arbitrary rule. In calling for democratization of the political system and the trade unions, for workers' control and self-management of state and mixed enterprises, students had embarked on a course of recovering independence for other sectors of the Left. The march had begun with chants of

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[77] Ibid, 112.
[78] Ibid, 117-118. Unlike scholars like April Carter, who separate direct action from "guerilla tactics," Hodges sees the latter as an example of direct action. Regarding the tactics of the student movement, Hodges writes, "Already in 1968 an 'anarquisante' (anarchizing) current committed to direct action had appeared from within the student movement, a current fed by Revueltas's critique of the PCM and by his revival of the legacy of Flores Magón. Direct action took three principal forms: student strikes, marches, and demonstrations against the government, followed by student-led urban guerillas, and student participation in popular coalitions and neighborhood committees of self-defense" (111). Revueltas was arrested on the charge that it was he who pulled the strings behind the scenes of the student movement. He was pardoned in 1971.
[79] Ibid, 127.
[80] Ibid, 128-137.
[81] Ibid, 137-146.

> "Mexico!...Freedom!...Mexico!...Freedom!" This cry had an anarchist, not just a liberal, ring.[82]

Notably, in his account of the student movement, Hodges does not even make mention of the counterculture that had grown to prominence during that same time. Agustín recalls that initially, the student movement and the counterculture of the "jipitecas" were two separate entities, but that increasingly, they merged over time, with some "jipitecas" joining the students in their actions while students adopted many of the attitudes and lifestyle trends displayed by the counterculture.[83] In the wake of the 1968 massacre, this dovetailing of the two youth networks became more self-conscious and purposeful, resulting in the emergence of "la onda:"

> The horrors of Tlatelolco, with its burden of assassinations, disappearances, tortures and detentions, had the most profound effects on the life of the country. Since then many young people believed that the routes to bring about change in Mexico had to be violent, and for that reason guerilla groups flourished in the state of Guerrero and the so-called urban guerilla in the big cities. But many young people, who were not motivated to go so far, consciously or unconsciously sympathized with the pacific rebellion of the "jipis," and without going so far as to take religiously the basic postulates of psychedelia, adopted many elements of the counterculture, especially the hair, the attitude, and the language. The "jipitecas," for their part, after being present for, and impressed by, the events of 68, also attenuated their psychedelic sectarianism and widened their social conscience. In this way they formed "la onda"...[84]

As I described in the first chapter, "la onda" was short lived and died out following the Avándaro festival, when just about all but "ondera/os" themselves seemed to criticize the counterculture.[85] The government increasingly targeted such youth as objects of repression, as well as closing down recording studios and interfering with rock concerts, until the latter survived only in the marginal, temporary "hoyos fonquis."

From his exclusively "social anarchist" perspective, Hodges did not see anarchist currents as operative in these networks. He reported that there was virtually no

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[82] Ibid, 127-128.
[83] Agustín, 82.
[84] Ibid, 83.
[85] Ibid, 88.

anarchist activity beyond the 1970s, and almost finished his book by observing that "the Mexican left was in total disarray,"[86] when just before it went to print, the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas occurred on New Year's Day, 1994.[87] In the years immediately following, activists from across the world began to converge in la Selva Lacandona, participating in the Zapatista "encuentros" and other solidarity activities. As Juris and others recount, this indigenous community's rebellion provided a good part of the inspiration for what Epstein called the "anarchist sensibilities" of the anti-globalization movement and others that followed. Attempts to reach beyond conventional notions of solidarity to connect global bodies of activists were among the hallmarks of social movement organizing in the late 1990s, when the influence of the Zapatista uprising was at its zenith.

People from Mexico City's punk scene were among those who traveled to Chiapas to learn from the EZLN, and some of them also participated in the Caravana Zapatista that brought representatives of the EZLN to Mexico City in 2001. In 2006, Subcomandante Marcos again traveled around Mexico to drum up support for La Otra Campaña, a broad alliance of indigenous communities, trades unions, and other social movement groups. In addition to the ways in which the legacy of Flores Magón may be divined in the ideologies and methods promoted through the EZLN since 1994, Mexico's labor unions, often through coordination with the umbrella organization, Frente Auténtico de Trabajo (FAT), have carried on anarcho-syndicalist traditions. Labor organizations have also worked to create solidarity among members of various social justice groups, particularly since the implementation of NAFTA legislation in 1994. Friends in Mexico City's punk scene participated in activities organized by the FAT at

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[86] Hodges, 180. In the years since its founding, the Partido Comunista Mexicano had gone into decline. In 1989, it was one of various small leftist parties to help found the Partido de la Revolución Democrática, which won the first mayoral elections in the Distrito Federal in 1997 and continues to control Mexico City today.
[87] See "Postscript" in Hodges, 191-200.

their headquarters during my fieldwork period, and organized benefits and other activities to show support for the striking electrical workers of the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas.

This rich, complex, and varied history of anarchism in Mexico thus forms the context for punks' self-understanding as anarchists. From figures like Flores Magón to the student movement to the EZLN, modern-day Mexican anarchists find inspiration in many historical individuals and groups who incorporated anarchist ethics in their efforts to promote social change. There is also the influence of "la onda," the Mexican counterculture, and the anarchist sensibilities it demonstrated through cultural politics in the wake of severe government repression. Finally, participants in the punk scene have access to ideas that flow in from a global punk underground that shares anarchist traditions from other parts of the world, such as punk squats in Europe and the boxcar-riding, dumpster-diving, work-refusing activities of so-called "crusty" punks in North America, who visit Mexico City's scene particularly from California and the Pacific Northwest. In the sections that follow, I will explore the impact of this deep and wide-ranging history on ideas about solidarity as they play out among "la banda," and particularly among members of Mexico City's punk scene.

9.4 Solidarity, Friendship, Affinity

"Solidaridad" is an important concept employed to connote the ties that bind Mexico City's punk scene and "la banda" more generally. In the chapter titled "Labor," I discussed the ways in which participants in Mexico City's punk scene work at fostering solidarity through the hard physical work and affective labor of musical performance, through the production of fanzines, and through the maintenance of exchange and bartering networks that support individuals' attempts at "autogestión."

In the section titled "Violence," I reviewed some of the more contentious, troubled ways in which punk scene participants may attempt to demonstrate solidarity, embodying their affective overdrive through the "portazo" and the slam dance, as well as through various self-defense training schemes.

With strong anarcho-syndicalist and anarcho-communist discourse continuing to shape local understandings of what anarchism is, the term "solidarity" often codes an emphasis on class-based unity, linked to on-going labor and agrarian struggles. Diane Nelson recognized the intersection of class and labor struggle in her critique of solidarity, remarking,

> Etymologically, "solidarity" suggests unity of opinion, purpose, interest, or feeling. In labor history, it has been a way of talking about hanging together so that one does not hang separately and of understanding that one's interests are best served by worker unity against the power of capital.[88]

To be "banda" among youth in Mexico City means to be adept at performing relationships that indicate not only a relatively unprivileged economic background, but also a sense of identity that is to some extent grounded by a sense of economic and social marginalization. On rare occasions, individuals from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds may convincingly demonstrate their unity with the working class or with "campesinos." But the belonging that "banda" solidarity affords is largely based on common points of identity, over and above the ways in which people from different walks of life may come together in search of common goals. This too-solid, rigid understanding of collective identification is what Diane Nelson was writing against when she substituted the term "fluidarity" for solidarity in her critique, mapping the

[88] Diane M. Nelson, A Finger in the Wound: Body Politics in Quincentennial Guatemala (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 41-42.

shifts and flows of her own identifications with transnational activists in the United States, Mexico, and Guatemala.[89]

In spite of the pervasive discourse on solidarity in Mexico City's punk scene, however, the networks that comprise it are not necessarily like those that form labor unions, activist organizations, or agrarian communities. People who participate in Mexico City's punk scene do not initially come together because they are united by any particular project or goal, though they may share many attitudes, preferences, and experiences. Relating to others through musical practices and performances may create intense affective bonds, as people feel together through musical experience. Through an extended acquaintance with other music fans with similar tastes, and the repetition of the intense feelings of musical experience, strong affective reactions to musical experience helps to forge friendship ties. Ultimately, friendship networks are an important basis of sociability among participants in the punk scene. It is from that intimate and yet potentially contentious and exclusive foundation that punks form bands, as well as the collectives and other partnerships that may work to address particular social and political goals.

In her history of social movement organizing from 1900 through the present day, sociologist Francesca Polletta engages with the kinds of social ties that many groups have relied upon for assembling their membership, from friendship to religious fellowship to teaching relationships. She explores friendship as a basis for social movement organization particularly in the context of the women's movement in the 1970s, when small groups of friends began to form "consciousness-raising" circles. While initially, this intimate form of organization worked well, fostering the "cooperation and care" that friends generally expect from one another, as the circles

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[89] Ibid, 41-73.

expanded over time, or tried to reach out to interface with a broader public, they often became intensely argumentative and fractious. Polletta describes this seeming paradox of the small, friendship-based feminist collectives:

> When former activists talk today about their lives in the movement, pride mingles with hurt, nostalgia with bitterness. Activists remember the joy of newfound political agency and solidarity with women too long viewed as competitors. But they also remember being denounced by fellow activists for exercising initiative or leadership and being "trashed" for trying to take a feminist message to a wider public. … They describe feminist collectives imploding in anger and mutual recriminations that left some members traumatized for years.[90]

Analyzing the reasons for these fallouts, Polletta notes that friendship is often formed by feelings of similarity between friends, and that the intensity of affective ties may inspire jealousy towards newcomers or exclusivity towards those who are not part of the group. Friendship may also impede discussion, as friends shy away from engaging in direct conflict with one another. While one benefit of friendship as a relational principle is that friends tend to see one another as equals, viewing their qualities as valuable even when they differ from their own, that sense of equality may be at odds with the ways in which social movements often imagine egalitarianism.[91] As Jo Freeman wrote in her well-known essay, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," in the absence of formal leadership structures, informal ones will occur.[92]

Over time, feminists attempted to mediate these difficulties through practices like the "disc system," in which a small number of discs was distributed to each woman, who would spend them each time she spoke at a meeting. Once her discs were spent, she would have to remain silent. But largely, feminist groups based on friendship rejected these tactics for their cumbersomeness, for the ways in which they hindered spontaneity. Polletta thinks that their objections were also based on their very

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[90] Francesca Polletta, Freedom Is An Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 150.
[91] Ibid, 149-175.
[92] Freeman. Polletta gives background on Freeman's own experience of exclusion in her consciousness-raising group, 163-164.

particular understanding of equality and how it should operate among a group of friends.

> Friendship among activists had also allowed them to learn from each other while feeling equal. Disc systems may have counteracted persistent inequalities but at the expense of women's experience of learning. Women's liberationists wanted all women to be leaders, an aspiration that required commitments both to individual self-development and to radical egalitarianism.[93]

Seeing a more "complex notion of equality" as characteristic of friendship, Polleta believes from her analysis of consciousness-raising groups that women subverted the complex equality of friendship for a simpler, more austere understanding of equality that does not naturally arise from friend relationships. She concludes, "There was thus a curious irony: women's liberationists' efforts to combat the inequalities produced by basing democracy on friendship sacrificed some of the democratic benefits of friendship."[94]

My experience with the collective that organized two successive Femstivals is indicative of a friendship collective's preference for informality. A core group of close friends were the ones most responsible for getting the festival organized, with an outer ring of less intimate friends and acquaintances far less in the know, and far less accountable for decisions and responsibilities. While it was clear that the group's intention was to be egalitarian, with formal leadership roles ostensibly rejected, it was never hard to tell who was—informally—in charge.

Additionally, in the first year, the original group of organizers reached out to another women's collective in the city, a group of European women with minimal ties to the punk scene, but with some friendship ties to members of the core group. While they were hard workers who contributed greatly to the smooth running of the festival, the European women's collective was excluded from the after-party and not invited to join

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[93] Polletta, 169. Emphasis in the original.
[94] Ibid, 170.

in the reincarnation of the organizing collective in the following year. There were ideological frictions between the two groups, differences over what constituted an appropriate feminism. There was also grumbling that the European women were "fresas." But what was most apparent was the ways in which one core of women huddled together during festival organization and execution, separate from the other core group, satellites like myself circling them both.

Navigating my own role in the collective was also fraught with difficulties, especially when I voiced frustration over my sense of being at the margins of the supposedly egalitarian group, which left me with little to do during the running of the festival. The leaders of the group responded with accusations that I was not showing enough initiative, that I needed to find ways to occupy myself. Clearly, they were at wit's end trying to perform all of the tasks that needed to be accomplished, but viewed delegating as dominating, authoritarian. When I pointed out that it was not easy to simply jump in since I had far less information about the details of the event's organization, one of the main organizers simply scolded me for not printing out a copy of the events schedule. Attempting after the festival to negotiate the resentment that my observations had provoked, I tried to interest a few friends in thinking about the informal hierarchies that may occur among groups that lack formal structures to combat it, but I found that there was little interest in imposing formality on an essentially informal group. I was therefore surprised to be invited back to help out in the following year—though I myself had a friend among the organizers—but found few changes in the group dynamic.

Though I offer an example of friendship networking among women I met through the punk scene, I do not mean to infer that this type of relationship dominates only among them. Informal, friendship-based organization drives every one of the punk collectives with which I had the opportunity of interacting. Men form the overwhelming

majority of most of them. Even in my contact with the anarchist organizations that overlap with the punk scene, I encountered the same casual, friendship-driven dynamic, though among them there was some nascent experimentation with the imposition of formal rules and decision-making procedures. Among these various types of friendship groups, in addition to the difficulties I observed regarding egalitarian decision making and respectful discussion, there was also a tendency toward paranoia directed towards outsiders, including myself. While the history of governmental spying through "porros" in Mexican social movements provides one basis for the flourishing of paranoia, the exclusivity of friendship ties may form another.

Though friendship, mediated by a discourse of solidarity, may dominate in Mexico City's punk scene and "la banda" more broadly, many global activists and scholars now prefer the term "affinity" to suggest the affective bonds that may unite members of activist social networks, from social movements to "transfer cultures."[95] While not entirely eclipsing the concept of solidarity, the term "affinity" more clearly suggests relationships based not only on friendship, but also on shared goals over potentially divisive facets of identity, such as class or gender.[96] In addition to indicating the fluidity of relationships across social differences, the concept of affinity has also been used in organizing small and shifting groups of people who come together for specific purposes and then may disband.[97] Affinity groups were instrumental to the organization of several of the anti-globalization protests, for example, with small groups

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[95] Very rarely, I did encounter the term "affinity" used in my fieldwork environment, for example in a copy of the fanzine Pensares y Sentires, number 32 (August/September 2009), which subtitles itself "publicación de afinidad." It is perhaps significant that one of the editors of this fanzine has been in direct contact with Zapatista communities, which have largely inspired the non-horizontal organizing strategies of anti-globalization protestors and other social movement groups since the 1990s.
[96] Day, 18. He traces a genealogy of a "logic of affinity," attempting to place it as an alternative to the kinds of solidarity imagined through autonomist Marxism and "post-anarchism." On the promise of the logic of affinity to shape the "coming communities," he writes: "…we need to guide our relations with other communities according to the interlocking ethico-political commitments of groundless solidarity and infinite responsibility."
[97] Affinity groups tend to work together in "clusters," and also in large federations called "spokescouncils." The organizational practices that these groups and networks perform may be quite elaborate, something that distinguishes them from earlier forms of small group organization. See Polletta.

of five to twenty people uniting according to the roles they wishes to play in the context of a mass direct action, from groups that engaged in civil disobedience actions to black blocs to street theater groups to small bodies of people who stayed on the sidelines in order to provide legal, medical, or other kinds of support.[98]

The formation of affinity groups is one of the forms of "networking logic" that Juris sees as key to contemporary social movement organizing, one of the ways in which activists take advantage of the rhizomatic structures provided through emergent networking technologies.[99] Polletta sees a double benefit in affinity group organizing, which is not dependent upon any particular identity.[100] She also notes that while people who engage in affinity group organizing highlight the closeness they feel with other members of their groups, it is precisely the fact that affinity group organization is not solely based on friendship ties that provides another of its strengths.

> Activists participating in groups like [affinity groups] have compared them to more intimate relationships: "We were like family"; "we became incredibly close." But the point is that they are <u>not</u> like intimate relationships, at least insofar as the latter are vulnerable to exclusivity and an avoidance of conflict.[101]

While affinity groups promise some of the benefits of the complex egalitarianism that Polleta believes to found friendship, as well as procedures to mediate difference, she cautions that not only is such organizing new and "fragile," but also that there are other factors that influence the potential success of participatory democracy. There are

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[98] Juris, 33-35.
[99] Though the concept of affinity has experienced a resurgence in activist practice in recent decades, it is a term with a fairly long history, dating back at least to late 19th century Spain. There, in the 1870s and 80s, small friendship circles called grupos de afinidad or tertulias began to engage in debate, the sharing of information, and preparations for actions. These groups maintained their independence from labor organizations while also working with other friendship-based groups through federation. For more on the history of affinity groups, see Francis Dupuis-Déri, "Anarchism and the Politics of Affinity Groups" in Anarchist Studies, vol. 18, no. 1 (2010).
[100] Polletta, 223. "Affinity groups in direct action today can be formed around any identity—political, sexual, or cultural. Traditional political creeds are only one among many bases for solidarity, activists recognize. Such groups provide the support that allows people with minority interests or views to stand up to the larger group, making a false consensus less likely. But activists are encouraged to 'go outside their comfort zone' in choosing affinity groups, joining people with different backgrounds. There are two insights here. One is that democracy must encompass difference in all settings, from the most intimate to the most public; the other is that joint action can create new and hybrid identities."
[101] Ibid. Emphasi in the original.

"differences in 'tastes' for organizational styles," such as those expressed by labor leaders uncomfortable with the "'touchy-feely'" quality of Direct Action Network meetings.[102] Facilitators in DAN meetings themselves have revealed a squeamishness about possibly crossing a line into a "Californian"—or a "new age," overly personal and expressive—style of politics.[103] Thus, Polletta concludes that "rules" and "relationships" are not enough to assure the health of participatory democracy among social networks. "Rituals" form the third point of her triangular model of how social organizations based on direct democracy might be founded and maintained. Yet she does not do much to develop her reasoning of why "rituals" matter, beyond referring obliquely to a Durkheimian effervescence, nor does she explore why some rituals may appeal more to one movement's "tastes" than another.[104]

Still, Polletta's "ritual" is an interesting counterbalance to a number of writers like Juris, who see ritual-like events such as mass direct actions as less important than the routines, the organizational procedures developed by anti-globalization networks. Juris is persuasive when he argues that it is in the debates that shape social movement organization that social movements constitute themselves.[105] But in his account, conflict that might occur during debate is largely staged and managed through evolving practices of horizontal planning and decision making. Here, he seems to agree with many scholars and activists who view procedure as the order through which to check disorder—disagreement, aggression, or other forms of difficult behavior—that may occur among the

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[102] Ibid, 213.
[103] Ibid, 197-198.
[104] Ibid, 224. "As Emile Durkheim observed, rituals strengthen group solidarity by taking people out of the routine of daily life and reenacting their essential groupness. Rituals may be used to strengthen new forms of group solidarity as well as older ones, infusing new relationships with a power and appeal that transcend narrow calculations of interest. One can imagine rituals and symbols used to foster norms of solidarity and dissent, respect and self-confidence, trust and accountability, all of which are necessary to successful participatory democracies."
[105] Juris.

members of a social network. For example, commenting on the divisiveness of black bloc tactics within the context of anti-globalization organizations, Juris remarks:

> …coordinating horizontally across diversity and difference may be an effective way to organize protests among widely disparate groups, but when it comes to important long-term political or strategic decisions, mutual tolerance may not be enough. More complex planning, including establishing the basic ground rules for sustained network interactions, requires concrete mechanisms for collective decision making that are highly refined and elaborated.[106]

In addition to displaying faith in planning and rules, Juris suggests in this analysis that "mutual tolerance" is simply a strategy, one that may be rejected in favor of more effective tactics.

On the other hand, some scholars uncritically celebrate affect, seeing it as the "return of the repressed," the irrational realm of emotion come back to confront the purely rational strategies upon which social movement organizations have relied.[107] Shantz thus calls for more critical evaluation of affect as a tool of social movement organizing.[108] Indeed, clearly affective elements of special events like demonstrations seem to be important forces of cohesion among social movement groups, from solidarity through friendship to affinity. As it became more and more difficult to out-maneuver authorities to stage effective mass direct actions in the context of the anti-globalization movement, for example, that movement began to fizzle. Similarly, in 2012, Occupy groups in the United States were seriously weakened when their encampments were shut down.

Nevertheless, I do not wish to fall into the habit of privileging "ritual" above strategy, or vice versa, adhering to a conventional binary between "emotion" and "reason." Indeed, the affective practices I have described among participants in Mexico City's punk scene—such as those that may be understood as loosely defined rituals such

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[106] Juris, 196-197.
[107] Day.
[108] Shantz, 42-44.

as street sing-alongs or the "portazo"—may be read through the lens of solidarity, a concept redolent with both conceptual and affective associations through its place in the context of Mexican history, politics, and aesthetics. While Polletta focuses on the ways in which informality constructs a politics of friendship, rules too are often informal, unspoken, and even unconscious. I am therefore hesitant to cordon rules off from rituals, seeing both as practices that evolve from the complexities of a group's history, ethics, and desires. The "tastes" that Polletta identifies as potential barriers between, for example, labor organizers and the members of affinity-based networks, shape the practices that she privileges as "rules," just as they shape those that she identifies as "rituals."[109] In Mexico City's punk scene, for example, an affinity for vehemence shapes quasi-ritual musical practices like the slam dance as well as the brusque, often conflictive manner in which participants conduct their interpersonal relations.

While punk in Mexico City is not a social movement per se, the participants in its networks have an interest in maintaining not only their friendships, but also their abilities to form collectives and other groups that intervene in their preferred political arenas. So, despite being part of a mesh of networks that is more diffuse than a social movement and less unidirectional in terms of goals, the punk scene offers insights as to how preferred affective practices among a social network may reveal a distinctive, local poetics of solidarity. It is to the intense, brusque quality of punk encounters that I turn next, as I consider the ways in which an affinity for oppositional politics and tough interpersonal dynamics shapes a poetics of solidarity in Mexico City's punk scene.

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[109] Polletta, 226. She refers to various actions, large and small, as the rituals that reveal a movement's "tastes." She provides the "twinkling" and other hand gestures used in DAN spokescouncil meetings as examples of "ritual," for example.

9.5 A Poetics of Punk Solidarity

My period of fieldwork in Mexico City took place during a tumultuous time in both national and international politics. From the global financial crisis, to the Arab Spring, anti-austerity protests in Europe, the continued Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, to the creation of Occupy encampments in the United States, there was always a great deal to talk about with my friends from the punk scene regarding world affairs. And then, there was plenty happening in Mexico too—the "war on drugs," paramilitary violence against indigenous peoples, hunger strikes in the Zócalo staged by members of the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas, Mexico's Bicentennial celebrations in 2010, and the run-up to the 2012 presidential elections, when it appeared certain that the PRI would regain power. While all of the controversies that evolved in Mexico garnered attention and discussion, if not consensus, I was often surprised by what attracted their interest in world politics. Looking back, I realize that I had expected my interlocutors to express an acute interest in any act of resistance on the part of any oppressed nation or group, anywhere. But that was not the case.

Despite following Los Indignados in Spain and especially the protests in Greece, my punk cohort revealed little interest in anti-austerity demonstrations in other European nations, or in Occupy encampments in the United States. No one that I knew from the punk scene showed any interest in joining the small encampment that appeared along the Reforma in the fall of 2011. While I read optimistic, even euphoric accounts of the Egyptian revolution in the press and some independent media, my punk cohort was quite negative, pointing out from the start the danger of relying on collaboration with the military, and the continued repression of activists in other nations in the region, like Bahrain. On the other hand, many revealed a sustained interest in Palestinian resistance

against Israeli occupation, with an intensity of contempt for Israel that could at times hint at anti-Semitism.[110]

While what I am calling "interest" in these events is a far cry from active solidarity, I believe that the global conflicts and forms of resistance that drew attention from participants in the punk scene are nevertheless significant. It's difficult to parse out affective from intellectual reasons for the interest in one group or another, though Polletta's "taste" does seem to play a role. The Greek cause was the one example that stood out most sharply for me. Though I could identify numerous ties between Mexicans and the Spanish protestors, or a multi-faceted antipathy to the United States and its support for Israel and the ruling elites in Middle East nations, a local punk interest in Greek politics seemed to be founded on rather different grounds. The correspondences suddenly snapped into place for me at a party I attended to inaugurate a new cultural space housing library and meeting rooms. I was standing behind a guest in a provocative t-shirt that compared Israelis to Nazis as the lights dimmed and images of Molotov cocktail-throwing protestors started looping on the far wall.

It occurred to me that the protests and other resistance movements around the world that provoked interest from friends who participated in the punk scene shared a similar style of resistance, employing large-scale mass actions like strikes, and often using destructive tactics in opposition to police or military forces. In Greece, masked protestors who engaged in property destruction and confrontation with police were often explicitly identified as "anarchists." Among conversations I had with punk friends in reference to the anti-globalization protests outside of Mexico around the turn of the century, one interlocutor emphasized the importance of Genoa, the spectacularly

[110] In fact, I encountered a great deal of anti-Semitic sentiment in Mexico, generally. Many people I knew in the punk scene and beyond it gave credence to the conspiracy theory that "the Jews" are trying to take over the world through dominance of global financial markets. When I expressed doubt, many people pointed to the clusters of synagogues in wealthy parts of Mexico City, such as Las Lomas or Polanco, as local evidence of the nefarious link between Jewish wealth, power, and influence.

contentious actions at which anti-globalization protestors experienced the most brutal police repression, leading to the death of one protestor and a great deal of injury, including protestors who had been attacked in their sleep following the day's demonstration.[111] Even when it came to the Zapatistas, who inspire observers beyond Latin America due to their largely peaceful rebellion, many of the people I knew in the punk scene seemed to value images of the masked and armed EZLN just as strongly for their resemblance to guerilla warriors than for the anonymity that Naomi Klein proposed as the "raison d'être" of the ski mask.[112]

Unlike those who rank style as an example of affective phenomena, I refer to authors like Thomas Turino or Naomi Cumming, who invoke semiotics to account for the multivalent quality of style as a form of expression.[113] While Hebdige, working from a Saussurian model of semiotics, as well as from a classical Marxist understanding of hegemony, sees punks in the 1970s United Kingdom as unconsciously expressing a fairly straightforward resistance through stylistic choices, scholars like Turino work from a Peircian model, and thus emphasize the interplay of signification—and especially "sonic" signification—between the three registers of icon, index, and symbol. While the indexical aspect of a sign might evoke affect more easily than iconic or symbolic elements of signification, many if not most signs are comprised of more than one type of

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[111] See Juris, "Spaces of Terror: Violence and Repression in Genoa," in Networking Futures, 161-198. Juris writes about the debate on the place of violence in protest among various networks that planned and carried out the anti-G8 protest in Genoa in 2001. For an analysis of the Black Bloc as an affinity group, see Shantz, "Black Blocs in Theory and Action," in Active Anarchy, 49-66.

[112] Naomi Klein, "The Unknown Icon" in ¡Ya Basta!: Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising, Writings of Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2004), 15-22. While support for the Zapatistas generally remained strong among my friends in the punk scene, a handful of my interlocutors expressed to me a sense of disappointment in them, for the diplomacy of La Otra Campaña, as well as for the ways in which the Zapatista encuentros had invited what some referred to as activist tourism.

[113] For semiotic analysis of style, see Dick Hebdige, Subculture: the meaning of style (London: Methuen, 1977). For musical signification in particular, see Thomas Turino, "Signs of Imagination, Identity, and Experience: A Peircian Semiotic Theory for Music" in Ethnomusicology, vol. 43, no. 2 (1999), 221-255. See also Naomi Cumming, The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000).

signification, and thus elude characterization as conveying exclusively affective or conceptual meaning.

Turning to an analysis of punk aesthetics as the basis for a poetics of solidarity, then, I consider elements of style among Mexico City's punks as meaningful through a blend of affective and ideological considerations, from the layered significance of a historical, mutualist anarchist practice like "autogestión," to the screaming voice as an index of rage that is also an icon of physical labor. In pursuing a poetics of solidarity, I am informed by discourse on music and language, in which the non-verbal referentiality of music draws attention to the form and ordering of a message communicated. As Feld and Fox remark

> …musically structured communication suppresses verbal referentiality in order to reveal the formal and pragmatic ordering of messages, codes, and communicative contexts. Music's formal redundancy and auto-referentiality heighten poetic texts and produce a musical metalanguage.[114]

Applying this model of musical communication to the variety of punk practices I've identified, I emphasize the ways that local punk aesthetics shape the form and order of messages about solidarity, creating a poetics of solidarity.

In previous chapters, for example, I have characterized interpersonal relations among the punk scene as intense, brusque, and even conflictive, encounters between participants comprising many types of proving grounds on which to demonstrate toughness and capability. From competitive joking to suggestions of physical prowess through elements of dress or even fighting, these performances of toughness form an important basis for a poetics of punk solidarity. Spontaneous street sing-alongs, as well as practices like the slam dance, the swapping and sharing of goods and services, the pleasure of "haciendo la vaca" to gain entrance to a punk show, screaming along with

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[114] Steven Feld and Aaron A. Fox, "Music and Language" in Annual Review of Anthropology , vol. 23, no. 1 (1994), 27.

the vocalist at a "tocada"—these practices and performances all provide moments of unity in what is often a fractious scene. Solidarity among members of the punk scene, as in any other context, cannot be taken for granted. It's not enough to propose that an essentially class-based solidarity exists among members of "la banda punk." It's not even enough that beneath a largely identity-based solidarity, there are friendship networks that buttress the scene's membership. Solidarity must be performed and re-performed again if it is to survive a punk aesthetics of noise, chaos, and rupture.

Despite the autonomous networks that thrive in Mexico City's punk scene, from the creation and distribution of recordings and fanzines in the scene's own informal economy, to more recent experiments like the back-to-the-land projects that small circles of friends are trying to carry out, punk performances still largely express an oppositional, dissident stance. In fact, I understand the postures of dissent as a source of great pleasure among participants in Mexico City's punk scene, and another important element in its poetics of solidarity.[115] Privileging the "love" of solidarity right alongside the "rage" of dissent, scene participants enjoy the intensity of both affects, which work together through specific affective practices to create moments of togetherness, emphasizing punks' dissident status within a "mainstream" culture, and the desire for a like-minded, alternative community. The love-and-rage is most evident through performances at punk shows, among slam dancers who vigorously, aggressively collide with one another in order to create a euphoric sense of communal catharsis.

While I cannot make a comparison of punks' intensity of rage compared with that of other "countercultural" or social movement groups, I do think it is important to point out that their favored expressions of dissent can and do alienate other groups—

[115] For an account of the pleasures of protest, see Marié Abe, "Partying to Protest: Henoko Peace Music Festa and Geographies of Violence in Okinawa, Japan" a paper read at the Society for Ethnomusicology's annual meeting in Mexico City, 21 November, 2009.

including their more strictly anarchist friends—who favor a more playful or deliberative style. Many social movement networks and "transfer cultures" may potentially indulge in expressions of righteousness for having taken the time to examine social problems and form diagnoses regarding what ails contemporary society. But participants in Mexico City's punk scene savor a sense of righteousness paired with an in-your-face oppositionality, which plays out not only in regard to politics, but also in vigorous rejection of everyday social and cultural norms. Intense and often very public performances of what may appear as an undirected rage register like Mary Douglas's "dirt," matter out of place, that has a variety of frequently negative effects on those who witness them from beyond the punk scene.[116] Those who characterize Mexico City's punks as uniformly violent and clannish, who disapprove of the disruptive and hedonistic behavior in which they may at times engage, cannot see the flip side of such profanities. Yet the poetics of solidarity among Mexico City's punk scene is based on a virtually inseparable affinity for the righteous and the profane simultaneously, their transient, contingent sense of unity grounded in a sensibility that eludes many observers.

Some contemporary theorists of anarchism find punk interesting because they see practices that play out in punk scenes (usually in Europe and North America) as indicative of an autonomous sensibility that grounds a new anarchist politics and social organization.[117] They cite D.I.Y. networks and squats that become community centers as some of the evidence that punks perform "self-valorizing" practices, which contribute to a politics of autonomy instead of a politics of dissent.[118] And indeed, some of these same practices occur in Mexico City's punk scene—there are a handful of squats peopled partially or exclusively by participants in the punk scene, there are the plans for

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[116] Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger (London: Routledge, 1966).
[117] See Day's section on "crusty punks" as lifestyle anarchists from the chapter titled "Doing it Yourself: Direct-action Currents in Contemporary Radical Activism" in Gramsci Is Dead, 19-45.
[118] For more on self-valorizing practices as elements of autonomy, see Shantz, 44-46.

countryside communities of friends, and there are various, overlapping networks of DIY-style exchange, from the swapping of goods and services to the "reskilling" that Shantz identifies as a key practice among "transfer cultures." Nevertheless, I would not characterize "autonomy" as the sole basis for solidarity among participants in "la banda punk." The pleasures and politics of dissent continue to inform the solidarity that participants in the punk scene strive to perform against the backdrop of many frankly oppositional encounters, among punks and between them and others beyond their social networks.

In addition to the ways that aesthetic analysis contributes to an understanding of the obstacles that may impede solidarity, Mexico City's punk scene is interesting for the ways in which its poetics of solidarity suggests a rapprochement between Bookchin's "lifestyle" and "social" anarchisms. While the social networks that form the punk scene in its wider "banda" context may share much in common with Agustín's counterculture, social anarchist tropes drawn from the key role of anarchism in Mexican political history survive among them too. It is from this lively, if contested poetics of solidarity that participants in Mexico City's punk scene stage their social and political experiments in anarchy.

9.6 Conclusions

Throughout my fieldwork period in Mexico City's punk scene, I was fascinated by the seeming inextricability of the aesthetic and the political for the people who shape it. My friends and acquaintances in the scene surprised me by engaging in little of the "shop talk" that musicians and fans tend to enjoy, often in favor of talk about politics. Still, it was clear that aesthetic preferences, and particularly those expressed through musical performance, were key to the creation and maintenance of punk as a social network. In this dissertation thesis, I have therefore tried to investigate the co-constitution of the aesthetic and the political for participants in Mexico City's punk scene, while also questioning what the political entails for them. What does it mean for participants in an explicitly musical scene to claim to be "political," and in particular, what does it mean to be anarchist for members of Mexico City's punk scene?

My research goals were largely determined by the types of relationships that I was able to forge with friends and interlocutors who participated in the punk scene, as well as the quality of the relationships that punk scene participants appeared to maintain with one another. Due to the intensity of feeling that they demonstrated amongst themselves and with me, I was inspired not only to analyze the importance of highly charged affective experience among Mexico City's punks, but also to represent that intensity through my writing. Following an experimental trajectory of ethnographic writing that favors short, thickly detailed narrative bursts, I have chosen to relate a body of "encounters," brief tales from my fieldwork that offer multiple avenues of interpretation despite the fact that they also can be grouped according to a handful of key themes, such as networks, labor, violence, and solidarity. I also called upon affect theory in order to account not only for the vivid feeling structures that punk scene

participants favor, but also for the ways in which they employed affective strategies to impact others, provoking and challenging people around them.

Visualizing the aesthetic and the political in Mexico City's punk scene as two sides of a coin, I also have attempted to put musical and social performance on an equal footing throughout my writing. Seeing musical performance as one type among a myriad of social performances that constitute the punk scene, I saw no reason to privilege it or non-musical social performances either. In writing about the history of punk in Mexico City and the relationships between punk scene participants there and in other scenes in other parts of the world, however, I have tried to indicate the ways in which punk in Mexico City is distinctive, formed of the signs that circulate globally as "punk," and yet grounded in the particular circumstances of life in el DeFectuoso.

One of the striking local circumstances that contributes to the distinction of Mexico City's punk scene is the impact of neo-liberal trade policies on the everyday lives of city residents, an enormous number of whom must face the vicissitudes of informal work. I have attempted to understand the significance of punk practices from the hard physical work of punk vocalizations to the fostering of DIY networks of exchange through the lens of changing concepts of labor and social belonging in an environment in which informal labor and underemployment dominate. Through various performance practices, as well as through attempts to foster solidarity and collective organization, participants in Mexico City's punk scene appeared to engage in a kind of social and political experimentation, which I have tried to match through my own embrace of formal experiment in ethnographic writing.

In addition to being struck by the challenges of a labor market in which punk scene participants have little opportunity to perform work traditionally understood as meaningful, I also was intrigued and disturbed by news stories that appeared during my time in the city, stories that framed "punks" as violent people, or as a violent "urban

tribe." The charge of violence leveled at young people who participate in the punk scene was particularly striking in light of silences about other, extreme forms of violence that impact contemporary Mexican life, from the "war on drugs" to the "femicidios" that have occurred most notably in Ciudad Juárez. I have attempted to speak about violence in a responsible way, one that does not contribute to the sensationalism of violence as it is often written in the press, made to appear as something foreign and disruptive to a culture at large. In drawing links between the various types of violence that threaten residents of Mexico City or participants in the punk scene specifically, I was also working towards the goal of critiquing various theories of "youth culture." While that discourse has garnered a great deal of attention in recent decades, with scholars recently attempting to apply network theory to the theorization of youth culture, I also hoped to push that dialogue further by invoking another, related discourse on social movement theory.

As I develop this work in the future, I look forward to further clarifying the ways in which the study of an overlapping body of social networks, like that found in Mexico City's punk scene, may contribute to social movement theory. In particular, I hope to elaborate on the notion that there is no great chasm between the political as voiced through a "social anarchism" and the "lifestyle anarchism" that also animates the politics of Mexico City's punk scene. On a related subject, I also envision continuing in my efforts to question a split between a politics of autonomy versus a politics of dissent or demand. Particularly because of the pleasure that oppositionality appears to bring to participants in Mexico City's punk scene, I see a politics of dissent as relevant even among those who also wish to create experiments in autonomy. I will consider further the intense affects that shape a politics of dissent as among the affects that nourish—and at times trouble—solidarity among members of the scene.

There is also more work to be done regarding the specific tastes or styles that shape a poetics of solidarity among social networks. In the future, I envision thinking more about Francesca Polletta's three "R's," complicating her triangulated model of social movement cohesion through rules, rituals, and relationships. In order to flesh out a poetics of solidarity in Mexico City's punk scene, I look forward to developing further my discussion of musical performance, tying vocal performance more directly with instrumental performance and describing the relationships between band members and between them and their audiences. I also would like to fill in the links I have sketched between punk as it initially arrived in Mexico through its various changes over the ensuing decades, becoming what it was for my interlocutors during my own, contemporary moment of fieldwork. In addition to a more in-depth tracing of these histories, I also think further information on the relationship between performance and other forms of musical circulation—most particularly recording and distribution practices and how these relate to practices within a broader Mexican music industry—will also help to ground my discussion. Finally, I aim to do more to incorporate my own background and training in visual art, including further analysis of the relationships between the aesthetics of sound and the visual. Through these various means, I imagine the opportunity to enrich and develop my analysis of a poetics of solidarity in Mexico City's punk scene.

9.7 Postscript

On the long overnight drive from Mexico City to Guadalajara to see Gatillazo perform, I knew not to expect much sleep. I was certain that the bus would be a mobile party, and that not even a carefully chosen seat and some earplugs would allow for any rest. What I was not prepared for was the hostility of one of my companions. Apparently, she was jealous that her seatmate kept turning around to talk to me. She berated him for it a few times, but she really turned her ire on me. Throughout the several hours of the drive, she lashed out at me repeatedly, mocking my appearance, my accent, pushing against my seat, demanding my attention. A couple of times, she succeeded in getting a rise out of me as I snapped back with some verbal retort. “Careful,” warned another woman who was making the trip with us. “She’s going to get angry.” But that seemed to be exactly what the woman wanted.

When we arrived into the city in early morning light, my stomach was upset from the sleepless night and from hours of swallowing my anger and hurt. As we descended from the bus, everyone nevertheless assumed that I would be hanging out with the group all day, including the woman who had abused me all night. Tired and sick, I declined. My companions gaped at me as I wandered off by myself, clearly taken aback by my strange choice. When I did finally rejoin the wider group for the “tocada” later that night, everyone gave me a very wide berth, ignoring me completely.

The scene at the gig that night was one of the more spectacularly aggressive ones I had ever experienced, with the Mexico City visitors seemingly bound and determined to suggest to the Guadalajara crowd that they were the toughest of the tough. Gatillazo might have decided not to visit Mexico City because of the notoriety of its punk scene, but Mexico City could still bring it to Gatillazo. Between the “portazo” and the looting of the bars, the smashing of bottles on the ground as well as those lobbed towards the

stage, drunken people teetering and vomiting, and the noise of fans screaming over the music, I could nevertheless feel a tense, edgy camaraderie being produced all around, if not with me.

The ride back to Mexico City was subdued, however. We had lost a few passengers, who had been detained by police. The partying still continued quietly, groups of friends chatting and drinking together over the long ride. In the aftermath of the gig, there was the usual tut-tutting on the part of certain people who had found the aggressive behavior excessive, blaming it on the "destroy" element within the scene. And yet, many expressed a sense of pride and satisfaction in the quality of the experience. As the bus pulled in to a major subway station at the edge of Mexico City, people made plans to carry on with their partying. However fractious or fleeting, the sense of solidarity generated through the events of the journey would fuel another day's sociability, tiding people over through the next weekend, when many would converge again at the Tianguis Cultural del Chopo, at the center of the big, monstrous yet marvelous city.

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Biography

Kelley Tatro was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1977. She attended the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester as a double-degree student, earning a Bachelor of Music in viola performance and a Bachelor of Arts in English in May 2000. With the support of the Joseph O'Connor Graduate Study Endowment Award, administered through the University of Rochester's English Department, she received a Master of Arts in an experimental interdisciplinary English and visual arts program from the University of Reading in England in 2001. In 2004, she earned a Master of Arts in Art History at Duke University. Continuing her studies in the Music Department at Duke University, she has since specialized in ethnomusicology, undertaking fieldwork in Mexico City from 2008 to 2011. Her research in the Music Department has been sponsored by grants such as the Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship, the Bass Fellowship for Undergraduate Instruction, the Aleane Webb Dissertation Research Fund, the Alice Blackmore Hicks Fellows Endowment, and a Duke University Graduate School Summer Research Fellowship.